

JOHN
FORBES
WHITE

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JOHN FORBES WHITE





JOHN FORBES
WHITE

BY INA MARY HARROWER

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

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JOHN FORBES WHITE

from a portrait by

SIR GEORGE REID, P.R.S.A.

(1879)

frontispiece

“DRENTHE”

from a painting by

ALEXANDER MOLLINGER

(1862)

page thirty-two

(*by kind permission of Colonel Thomas Ogilvie, C.M.G.*)

“AITCHIE”

from a portrait by

GEORGE PAUL CHALMERS, R.S.A.

page forty-four

(*by kind permission of Sir James Murray*)

“SOUVENIR D’ITALIE”

from a painting by

J. B. C. COROT

page seventy-two

(*Glasgow Corporation Gallery*)

THE DON AT SEATON COTTAGE

from a photograph by

JOHN FORBES WHITE

(1855)

page ninety

751660

‘ Bless and praise we famous men—
Men of little showing,
For their work continueth,
And their work continueth,
Broad and deep continueth,
Great beyond their knowing ! ’

KIPLING.

JOHN FORBES WHITE

THE best introduction to any life record of John Forbes White is the fragment of an autobiography which he began at the request of his children.

He wrote: 'There is scarcely a man that has lived the allotted span of threescore years and ten who has it not in his power to leave behind him some notes to interest his family, and, it may be, some outside friends. For every life that is worth calling a life starts with some high ideal, and towards the end of that life it is well to look back on the past and to sit in judgment on one's own career. An honest analysis of motive and purpose, a scenting of success or failure is a useful occupation: it is a preparation for higher judgment. The work indeed may have been of small bulk and of commonplace quality, but the question is, "Has the talent, small as it may have been, been used for good or for bad account? Has any contribution been made towards the welfare of others or for the sweetness of life around us? Has a life been lived?"

'There is some fitness in the task, for at this period of life the struggle is past, the surging of the waves has settled down and in the calm enforced by waning strength there is time for reflection. To accept the advent of old age is a pagan as well as a Christian virtue. "To grow old sweetly" and to be ready for "the gentle darts

JOHN FORBES WHITE

of Apollo" is a frequent phrase of Homer's, and Christianity gives us the same advice when it speaks to us of the beauty of the hoary head. The difficulty is to learn to accept the situation.

'Every life, even the most humble, is a drama; it is the history of a soul. How has it been developed by education and circumstance, how far has it followed its own bent or been crossed by outward as well as by inward conditions? These are the questions each one has to ask himself.

The answers to these pregnant queries will throw in every case much light on the ways of society, religious beliefs and usages, and the methods and standards of education some sixty years ago and thus a wider interest is evolved. For half a century brings revolution in many ways. The old gives place to the new, not always for better, and our children have as much difficulty in realising the change as if we were taking them back a hundred years. Hence it appears to me to be the duty of fathers like myself to collect these memories, which otherwise will be speedily forgotten.

'I was born in Aberdeen on 11th January 1831, the youngest son and the youngest child of as kind and good parents as ever lived, strict but loving. They lived for their family, their sole object in life being to do their duty by them, and to give each one of them such an education as would fit them for any position in the world. We

JOHN FORBES WHITE

were carefully guarded from every evil influence, allowed to have only a few companions and these carefully chosen. We were kept, too strictly I think now, aloof from school games, our time of going to and from school being closely watched to prevent lingering on the way. On Saturday afternoons we walked under the care of my name-father, Mr. Harry Forbes, and subsequently with our tutor. Yet this jealous care could not prevent risk of accident, for my brother Adam and I were both nearly drowned together opposite Seaton in 1840 by the boat being swept over the dyke in a spate. Indeed our isolation from the sports of our class-fellows was carried to such an extreme that for high-spirited boys a reaction was inevitable, though in a harmless way, and "truing" the writing hour became somewhat frequent that we might have our game at marbles or play at "Key-how" in the lanes and closes of the Denburn.

'Several sports were interdicted at home, such as the use of pistols, gunpowder and fireworks. Even penknives were looked on with disfavour, while skates were forbidden, and this not without reason. We lived near the canal, and every now and then a death by drowning was reported. It is easy to see now the wise principle which was at work. Every manly exercise was favoured. We were encouraged to fish on the streams opposite the Cathedral and to learn to swim. I well

JOHN FORBES WHITE

remember my father's and mother's pleasure as we swam down the lade at the Cottage. We were prohibited to go beyond our depth, and to taste this forbidden fruit Adam and I had to climb through our bedroom window at midnight that we might swim across a six-foot pool by moonlight. Further example of wise guidance, we were among the very few boys sent to a riding-school and afterwards were allowed to have a pony, while with (Colonel) James Allardyce we were the first, and for long, the only boys sent to Foucart's Gymnastic Classes, then an absolutely new institution in Aberdeen, the parent of several successors. Yet no theatre was to be thought of and Cook's Circus only once in the season. I never darkened the threshold of the old theatre in Marischal Street, except once when I stole for one short hour to see Helen Faucit, having to be home invariably at nine o'clock, except by special permit. Even at college it was a novel experience for me to hear Ewing and Peter Duguid speaking of "last night's play"; it was a world outside us.

'Dancing was not neglected, but in our early days the dancing-master, Mr. Balfour, gave us private lessons at home. Our father was anxious that we should be taught singing, so we had many private lessons in Psalmody and "Row, Brothers, Row" from Mr. Colston, the precentor in the West Church. As these took place on the

JOHN FORBES WHITE

Saturday afternoons we looked on them with great disfavour, and played the dull Colston many a trick.

‘ Looking back at the general scope of this home training, who can fail to see that its high purpose was to make good useful men and women? Corporal punishment was indeed rare; a word of disapproval was sufficient. If my father thought any of us had acted meanly or untruthfully, he refused to walk on the same side of the street as the culprit. A large-hearted, clear-minded man, he was in political views far in advance of his time. An earnest reformer, a Free Trader when these views were looked on with dislike by merchants, he formed his opinions largely under the influence of the *Edinburgh Review*, to which he was a regular subscriber. He was a member of the first Reformed Town Council of Aberdeen, and took his share in the public discussions of the day. In Church and State affairs he was a Whig, for Liberals had not come into existence then, and he remained in the Church of Scotland at the Disruption as a Constitutional Reformer who disliked the high pretensions of the extreme party. “They are just the claims of the Church of Rome” (pronounced Room in the old-fashioned way), I remember him saying in discussion with our tutor.

‘ A year after the Disruption and shortly before his death he followed his much-loved Dr. David-

JOHN FORBES WHITE

son to the Free West Church, being weary of the dull preaching and lack of spiritual life which followed in the "old West." For during his whole life from his earliest days he was deeply interested in the moving power of sermons, as many of his note-books still show. "The depravity of man" was one of his favourite themes. He was indeed a fine example for his sons in his manly upright life. Large in his ideas and enterprising in business, he arranged the future of his affairs with wisdom and forethought, taking a new lease of his Mills for thirty-six years. I remember him sitting on a big stone superintending the excavation of the new mill-lade the year before he died. His heart was then weak, and he seemed anxious that the men should not overtoil themselves. He died when I was fourteen years of age. One peculiarity he had which I have never found in any other man. He was scrupulous about clean hands and taught us how to wash our hands, using three waters, first full of soap-suds, next with less soap, and last of all in clean pure water.

'My mother remains to me a still dearer memory, for she lived far into my manhood. She gave me my first lesson in the alphabet, it is said, on my third birthday. I was the youngest of the family and was called her Benjamin, and thus had the privilege of lying in her lap. I remember playing with the keeper of her chain, listening

JOHN FORBES WHITE

to the ticking of her watch and the throbbing of her great heart, and pulling the worsted of her special pattern of muffatees. She was beloved by all, rich and poor, the friend of her servants, Elsie Davidson the cook and of the good Annie Collie, our faithful nurse, both of whom remained in her service for nearly forty years. Elsie was a strict Scotch Episcopalian, coming from Longside, the parish of Skinner of "Tullochgorum" fame. She disliked Presbyterianism and its ways and used to inveigh against "that rascal John K—nox." As my mother's people had been Episcopalians for generations we were now and then allowed to go to "the Bishop's" with Elsie. Annie Collie, on the other hand, was a Seceder, and we did not relish so much our visits to the balder service in Belmont Street. The two, however, had some common beliefs, and repudiated with anger our boyish argument that the world was round. Good Annie Collie! What a power for good! If we behaved well in going to bed she read us a chapter from her great Henry's Bible, but if we were disobedient we were denied this and she closed the Book. "Oh, Annie! come back and read, and we'll be good," we shouted to her as she went off summarily downstairs, and she would come back radiant. Or when she was pinning on our big stiff linen collars and we were struggling to escape, with her mouth full of pins she would say, "Stan' still, ye *v-ratch*, that I su'd

JOHN FORBES WHITE

be provokit to say sic a word!" It was she that conducted me daily to my first school, Dr. Ledingham's in the present House of Refuge and afterwards in Correction Wynd, and that took me to see fireworks set off in the woodyard in Frederick Street. Good Annie Collie! with thy gray, twinkling, kindly, humorous eye and comely face, netted all over with thread-like veins, thy well-formed nose and mobile mouth, watchful over our wants and ways, proud of our prizes, jealous of our reputation as if we had been thine own bairns. If I can to-day repeat the first chapter of Job it is because sixty years ago or more I got a penny from Annie for the task. Another favourite chapter of which she never wearied was 1 Corinthians xiii.—"Charity suffereth long and is kind." "Gree, bairns, 'gree," was her constant advice. I still treasure the beautifully bound Psalm Book she gave me when she left the house. It had been bound to her order in blue calf and my name is inscribed in gilt letters on the inner cover.'

Here unfortunately the notes come to an end.

Speaking of his mother in after years he said, 'The finest thing in literature is the meeting of Ulysses and his mother. Like Ulysses I'd try thrice to clasp her.' But although the tie between them was strong, the spirit of the times fostered no inconsiderable austerity. Once when

JOHN FORBES WHITE

the little boy nearly had the top of his little finger squeezed off in a gate he was fearful of announcing the disaster at home and went to a chemist's to have it bound up. It was his habit in later years to make this accident responsible for his illegible handwriting! Sundays were strenuous in those days. There were two long services to be attended, two long sermons to be listened to, and two long abstracts to be written about them in the evening. A copious dose of the Shorter Catechism, not overlooking the complicated 'Reasons Annexed,' was wedged in during the day. Another trial to youthful nerves was when the minister came on stated occasions to put the children through their theological paces.

Books were few and far between. Sixty years afterwards the memory of his first novel caused him to tingle. It was called *Lochindhui*. It was 'glo-r-r-r-i-ous.' Pathetic tears were shed over Jane Porter's *Scottish Chiefs*. Wrathful tears were shed over the holocaust by a stern sister of a smuggled copy of the *Arabian Nights*.

The boy's first introduction to Art was on being taken to the Music Hall to see a picture by Caracci. It was an 'Adam and Eve,' and he tried to reproduce it when he got home to his paint-box.

The private school was followed by the New Grammar School, where John was under Dr. Melvin, the great Latinist. A paper written in

JOHN FORBES WHITE

his seventy-second year for his old school magazine throws a most interesting light on the educational methods of the time. It also reveals how vividly the personality of his teacher had impressed itself on him. Here is his account of Melvin and the life at school.

'Before entering the Rector's class-room, let us look at the environment of the School. There was no playground, and of course no games in the modern sense. Golf was unknown to us youngsters, and cricket and football were yet a long way off. The small quadrangle in front of the modest one-storied building was mostly paved with cobblestones, which made a good playground for the game of "Buttons"—an excellent game, like "Pitch and toss"—which disappeared when gentlemen ceased to wear brass buttons on their coats. "Marbles," of course, were in vogue wherever a hard, flat surface could be found for the superb game of "the ring." "Leap frog," with its extension to "foot and a half," was a favourite game, the latter played chiefly in the public school for the display of long leaps over a boy's back, a risky game for the boy. "Burry on the factions" was also carried on in the great school, a dangerous sport, as running at full speed on the top of the benches frequently led to serious falls. But the streets were our larger playground. "Key-how" and "Smuggle the gig" (a sort of "Hare and hounds") made us ac-

JOHN FORBES WHITE

quainted with every hiding-place in the Mutton Brae, the Denburn, the far-off Patagonian Court and the Gaelic Lane, while the traditional snow-ball and stone fights with the "apprentices" and "Sillerton Boys" gave abundant room for war-like tendencies.

'But a few minutes before the school hour there is a pause in all games. A large-framed man with round shoulders, dressed in black, is seen approaching the gate. With head bent forward, and treading lightly on his toes, he advances over the flagstones towards the steps leading to the public school. Even the youngest are hushed to silence as he passes through the crowd. Mark his sallow face, deeply scarred by small-pox, his keen black eye and pursed-up thin lips, the corners of his mouth inclining to a gentle smile or depressed to sternness. We are all conscious that a strong man is by us—the great scholar, Dr. James Melvin, "Grim Pluto." Slowly he takes his place in front of the clock in the public school, draws out his gold hunting watch, compares it with the clock, says a few words to the assembled under-masters and then bows to them, after which ceremony each master retires to his own class-room. A short prayer, with some phrases frequently repeated, as: "Where Thy mercies are clean gone for ever," and work begins. What accuracy was required! No paraphrasing allowed, no evading a difficulty.

JOHN FORBES WHITE

Without doubt, our translation from Latin into English was stiff; nay, sometimes wooden, and certainly the spirit and beauty of a passage were to us of secondary importance. In such a system of minute detail and verbal criticism, free copious reading was impossible, and the enjoyment of Horace or Vergil was not manifest in us. Hence we should have dreaded an "unseen" passage from a Latin author far more than a "Version." We had no ease in our reading, no idea of style. We heard constantly of Cicero, but we never read any of his work. My copy of *Buchanan's Psalms* bears the order of the words dictated to us by the good Doctor for preparation at home on the Saturday evening. Fancy this, after four years wholly given to the study of Latin, when we should have been able to read the Psalms with some freedom for our pleasure on the Sunday.

'But it was in analysis and parsing, in the opening up of the various meanings of a verb or noun and their relation to each other, in "phrases" and "idioms," that Melvin excelled. We had no other dictionary than the miserable "Ainsworth," and the Doctor had to clothe its dry bones with living flesh. We made copious notes and indexed our manuscript books so that we might be able to find the examples when wanted. Labour of this sort would be misplaced nowadays. Better Lexicons and ampler notes in text books set boys free from this drudgery and give a

JOHN FORBES WHITE

better chance of enjoying the spirit of an author. What a god-send, for instance, both to teachers and pupils is Dr. Robert Ogilvie's *Horae Latinae* with its fine distinctions and general principles!

'But Melvin was two generations in advance of his time and did a service to Latin scholarship in Scotland which cannot be over-estimated. The *Phrase and Idiom Books* compiled by his best pupils have circulated over the North of Scotland, forming the basis of much instruction in regard to syntax. But his living influence was the dominant feature of his class. His personality was tremendous. To be under him was an education in itself, for he moulded the accurate habits of thousands of boys.

“The Version” was of course the main feature of his class. It was carefully constructed to bring out our knowledge (or ignorance) of “the indirect speech,” “the interrogative put indefinitely,” and all the niceties of *sunt qui, quominus, quin*, and so forth. So earnest was he that it seemed to give him positive pain when a good pupil made some horrid “maxie,” while, on the other hand, it gave him pleasure to write “*sine errore*” and still more when he could add, in his beautiful penmanship, *et elegantissime* at the bottom of a version. His jibes were severe and sarcastic, but the culprit felt that they were deserved. Carelessness and inattention he could not abide, but he dealt lightly with studious

JOHN FORBES WHITE

mediocrity. That he had favourites is true, but they were the bright boys whose work pleased him and whose errors he grieved over. I can recall no instance of favour for the sons of the rich, if the boys were content to sit habitually near the foot of the class. He had a liking for a boy who would privately defend some alleged error in his version. I remember once writing *humanum genus* instead of *genus humanum*—and this was to be marked as an error. Between school hours I hunted up some defence and found it in Sallust, “Well, I’ll let you off this time, but you must take for your guide Cicero rather than Sallust,” was his reply. Before the holidays he used to review the work of the previous quarter and would tell us of the number of *sine errore* versions he had got from former classes. In an evil moment I whispered to my neighbour that this had been the golden age, whereupon he laughed, and I was ordered to speak to the Doctor at the end of the hour. “I want to know what you said to Archibald Simpson.” Sheepishly I answered that it was nothing at all worth repeating. “Well,” said the Doctor, taking a big pinch of snuff out of his beautiful Scotch mull, “you are not to leave this spot till you tell me what it was.” So I told the truth, and got a great knock on my ribs from his elbow and the reply, with a pleased smile, “Well, it *was* the golden age.” Beneath that stern exterior there beat a manly, loving

JOHN FORBES WHITE

heart, restrained however in its manifestation, as was the bearing of teachers to pupils in those days. He was a Roman of the Romans, *Ultimus Romanorum*, I should say, and one can easily picture him in the company of Cicero and of Livy, of Vergil and of Horace, the authors whom he loved so well. He liked the old Scottish tongue and rolled out with gusto on rare occasions the fine verse attributed to Allan Ramsay,

There I saw Sisyphus wi' muckle wae
Birsin' a big stane up a heich heich brae,
Tryin' to get it up abeen the knowe
Wi' baith his han's and baith his feet. Bit wow!
Fan it's maist deen, back in an awfu' dird
Doon stots the stane and thumps upo' the yird.

'Melvin was not a Grecian; but he taught the Greek Grammar well, as he taught everything. We used a wretched *Anton's Greek Grammar* —the same American Anton whose edition of Horace we generally used and whose notes Melvin inveighed against bitterly for their inaccuracy. The only Greek we read was a few chapters of St. John's Gospel. This simple statement gives the measure of the difference between those past days and modern times as to Greek.

'Melvin was a licentiate of the Church of Scotland, and after the Disruption, when every pulpit in the city was bereft of its minister, he used to take his share in supplying the void. A favourite text was: "For it is appointed to all men once to

JOHN FORBES WHITE

die, and after death the judgment," which gave him an opportunity of expatiating with all his force on the difference between a good life and a bad one. In his holidays, he would spend some time at various country manses, and there, I am told, he was frequently facetious in his Latin jokes.

'All honour to his memory! A strong personality, a splendid example of the old grammarian, he laid the foundations for a wider and fuller scholarship in after years and under other influences. To me he represents the School of my time.'

Leaving the school as 'Dux' John entered Marischal College as First Bursar at the age of thirteen in 1844. He was the most brilliant student of his year and graduated in 1848.

The most stimulating influence in his University course was Professor Blackie, who then held the chair of Latin. He used to say that the wide scope of Blackie's teaching coming on the top of the detailed particularity of Melvin made the most amazing combination. Years afterwards he wrote: 'We got minute accuracy from Melvin and breadth from Blackie *with a sense of Literature*, so that at the end of the second session we could not only speak but think in Latin.' On my bookshelves there is a prize for a Latin essay of twenty pages on 'The Romans in Scotland,' written in his second session. Blackie would make his pupils stand up in class and describe

JOHN FORBES WHITE

a picture or a statue. This engendered an ease and facility which never left him. He could write Latin verses as easily as sign his own name. On the morning of his son Maurice's graduation he composed while in his bath some additional verses for the 'Gaudeamus,' which have since been incorporated in the time-honoured song. His rendering of 'Tom Bowling' was a *tour de force*. There is still extant a delightful fulmination against a burning poultice applied with too great zeal to his chest by a daughter and an old maid-servant. I once heard him complain of our limited swearing compared to Latin anathemas! He sometimes dreamt in Latin, and he once said, 'When I pass Lunan Bay I always let myself out in Latin.' He was Blackie's most brilliant and most beloved student. The Professor's name for him was *Λευκών*, the white or shining one. Their love for one another never lessened. Blackie often visited us. The visits were always piquant and unusual. A habit of his was to inscribe one of his favourite texts, *πλήρωμα νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη*, on any letters going to the post, whether orders for the grocer or invitations to dinner was immaterial! Towards the end of his life Blackie wrote :

' MY DEAR *Λευκών*—We give our warmest reciprocations for your good wishes. Longevity is a condition of life that I have never prayed for,

JOHN FORBES WHITE

but since it has come it has proved itself a blessing in more ways than one ; although Autumn never can be so bright as May it brings a fruit with it which is ample compensation for the loss of blossom. Aberdeen I never cared for, particularly as a place, but some of the people in it I number amongst my earliest and best friends, and you and your dear *σύζυγος* and all your *γεννήματα* and *κηδεύματα* head the list. May God be with you all to the end and may I, during the short space that may remain to me beneath the setting sun, do nothing that may cast a shade of gloom over the brightness of the loving respect of so many dear friends.—Sincerely yours,

‘JOHN S. BLACKIE,
‘πλήρωμα νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη.’

J. F. went to say ‘Farewell’ to the old sage when he was dying. He often described the scene. ‘As he wakened from his sleep he took me by the hand and said, “ἀληθεύων ἐν ἀγάπῃ ; *agappe*, do you hear?” (pronunciation of Greek by accent being one of his foibles)—“Speaking the truth in love, in love.” Then his thoughts seemed to wander on the same lines. “The sun gives light and heat ; light for knowledge, heat for love.”’ After his death Mrs. Blackie gave J. F. a small bronze bust of Goethe and a lock of his hair. They had been given to Blackie by Frau Goethe and are preserved by the family.

JOHN FORBES WHITE

The next most enduring influence among his teachers was Professor William MacGillivray, Professor of Natural History and Lecturer in Botany. His was a magnetic personality. He was an all-round naturalist, being equally proficient in botany, ornithology, and geology. Clergymen flocked to his geology classes to hear what Science had to say in regard to the age and creation of the world. Professor Blackie enrolled himself as a student. His last work, *The Natural History of Deeside*, was published three years after his death by command of Queen Victoria. Fifty years afterwards J. F. unveiled a Tablet erected to his memory. In his speech acknowledging his 'life-long indebtedness to an honoured teacher,' he said:

'We felt that new powers were being awakened in us; that the hitherto dormant faculties of observation, comparison, classification, and generalisation were receiving a new stimulus. It is true that many of these students have drifted into other pursuits and lines of study, but the influence of MacGillivray's methods and spirit abides indelible. They are applicable to Art as well as to Science; Truth in both cases being the ultimate aim.'

A third teacher of whom one did not hear so much was Professor Brown, the Greek Professor. He was known as 'Greek Brown.' A pleasant incident connected with him was that when John

JOHN FORBES WHITE

Phillip was painting his portrait Mrs. Brown begged that John White might be allowed to go and talk to her husband so as to ensure a genial expression on the old man's face! It is nice to think of this introduction to the studio life that was to play so large a part in the boy's future history.

After graduating J. F. decided to follow the medical profession. He had finished his first year, being Prizeman in anatomy, when his elder brother Adam answered the self-sacrificing call to missionary work. He went to India, and some years after died there of cholera in the midst of his cholera-stricken flock, whom he refused to leave. His name is still revered in the East.

The younger brother now had his career settled for him and threw himself into the father's business of flour-milling with the indomitability which was to be the distinguishing mark of his whole life. The mill was four miles from the harbour, and to save horse labour he ordered a new type of road engine to be constructed. It was the first to be used in the North of Scotland. When it arrived the huge mammoth on its trial trip stuck on the steep 'brae' above Balgownie Bridge. An unsympathetic crowd looked on delightedly! Undaunted he ordered another of greater power and set to work to construct a new bit of road. The hill of difficulty was thus avoided and the new road proved a boon to the

JOHN FORBES WHITE

neighbourhood. The 'Don' behaved so well that opposition finally died down. After twenty years of careful service the farmers in the country-side made a presentation of well-filled purses to the excellent driver and stoker.

J. F.'s first travels, at the age of twenty-three, were to the grain-exporting ports of Northern Germany. While journeying in a diligence between Stettin and Dantzig he talked Latin for hours with an old professor of mathematics from Cracow. Later on he went to Buda-Pesth, the centre of the Hungarian wheat-fields, and studied their 'roller' system, which he afterwards installed in his modern mill.

In 1850 the 'Hellenic Society' was started by Professor Blackie. I take the following account from his *Biography* by Miss Stoddart: 'Its inaugural meeting took place in Mr. Forbes White's house, and initiated the habit of assembling at the houses in turn of such members as were householders. On the first occasion ten students met the professor, and it is interesting to record the future eminence of four of their number. Mr. Donaldson (afterwards Sir James Donaldson, Principal of St. Andrews), Mr. Geddes (afterwards Sir William Geddes, Principal of Aberdeen), Mr. Davidson, Professor of Hebrew in the University of Edinburgh, and Mr. Sachs, Free Church Professor of Hebrew in Aberdeen. These gentlemen were all students of the Humanity

JOHN FORBES WHITE

class, and those surviving, as in the cases of Mr. Forbes White and Mr. C. Robertson, have maintained the scholarship which they learnt to appreciate in those days.'

Another Society to which he belonged—composed chiefly of fellow-students of 1844—is referred to by Sir James Donaldson, in a paper entitled, 'Sixty years ago.' He says: 'Its object was to study the works of Tacitus, and we read the whole of the Annals and Histories, discussing at the same time the trustworthiness and the language of the historian. Three of the members were quite remarkable for their ability, namely, Alexander Murray, John Forbes White, and Thomas Kyd. The first two afterwards greatly distinguished themselves in life.'

Between 1855 and 1857 were produced the series of beautiful architectural and landscape photographs which are so well known now. He used to say they entailed the hardest work of his life. The 12 x 10 inch paper films had to be prepared by ironing-in hot wax. The camera was unwieldy, the lack of dark rooms and the experimental efforts at developing added to the difficulties. Sometimes irate hotel-keepers would ask him to remove himself and his obnoxious chemicals. In later years he would exclaim, when looking at them, 'Isn't that beautiful? I try to think some one else did them.' Some were exhibited in the great Glasgow Exhibition. The editor of an

JOHN FORBES WHITE

American art journal wrote asking permission to reproduce one of the St. Machar's 'Twin Spires' (page 90). He called it a 'masterpiece in photography.'

In 1857 he read for the first time Carlyle's *French Revolution*, 'marching up and down the room like a caged lion in his excitement.' Quarter of a century afterwards he could not resist a chance of speaking to the great historian. Carlyle was sitting in his brougham at his own door. The old man took the younger man's hand in his and kept it there as they spoke; and when Aberdeen was mentioned he said dreamily, 'Aberdeen, that was Beattie's university. Poor Beattie, poor Beattie!'

In 1859 came his marriage with one who made the unfolding years resplendent with happiness, who shared his every thought and interest, and who even surpassed himself in the beauty of her service for others. Blackie, writing a month before the event, said, 'John White is very active and cheerful and wildly happy.' It was soon after this that he stayed in a friend's house which had just been decorated by the artistic genius Daniel Cottier. The harmonious work was a revelation to him, and he at once asked Cottier to redecorate his town house. A drawing-room and dining-room designed by Cottier were added to Seaton Cottage, and a stately drawing-room was built at Bridgefield, Bridge of Don, where his mother

JOHN FORBES WHITE

now lived. Up to its great bow-window overlooking the North Sea and the distant town of Aberdeen he rode daily to greet her on his way to business.

Cottier was a pioneer, too, in stained glass, which in mid-Victorian days had sunk to a fearsome level. His windows are splendidly rich in colour, but are perhaps treated rather too pictorially. J. F. had one put in St. Machar's Cathedral in memory of his brother Adam. The figures represent St. John the Baptist and St. Paul, the two greatest missionaries. Other examples of Cottier's windows are the 'Faith, Hope, and Charity,' also in St. Machar's, and the great West Window in St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh.

The year 1862 was a momentous one for J. F. He went to London to see the International Exhibition, and was carried away by a picture by a young unknown Dutchman, Alexander Mollinger of Utrecht, which he at once bought. Mollinger was a pupil of Roelofs, while in his figure-painting he was under the influence of Israels. His works lacked the qualities of realism then in vogue, and were painted in quiet harmonious colours. The landscape which made such a deep impression on J. F. was a typical Dutch scene called 'Drenthe.' Across a bleak stretch of moorland a solitary woman wheeled a barrow, a clump of trees relieved the low line of the horizon, the great expanse of sky was alive with rolling



JOHN FORBES WHITE

clouds, while flocks of birds flew homewards in the evening light. It reminded one of Delacroix's definition of a Rembrandt landscape, 'Une plaine, un ciel et de la tristesse.' The picture was remarkable for its truth of tone, its light and atmosphere, its fine composition and its sincerity. J. F. at once wrote to the painter asking all sorts of questions about it; which way the wind blew and what was the time of day, and ordered a companion picture of the same important size. A visit to Utrecht soon followed the correspondence, and the friendship was cemented. Other canvasses began to come. There was a little picture, 'La Pauvre Famille,' which was treated with exquisite sympathy and simplicity. It was a family 'flitting.' The few familiar household goods were piled on a hand-cart, the husband with bent head led the way, the wife and children followed sadly. Mollinger wrote about its arrival: 'J'étais très heureux de recevoir votre dernière lettre avec la bonne nouvelle que mon petit tableau était à la fin des fins arrivé à vous et que "La Pauvre Famille" a trouvé pas seulement votre sympathie mais aussi une place dans votre salon.' There were also two exquisite water-colours, 'Morning' and 'Evening,' both breathing of the perfect stillness of early dawn and late evening; the flock of sheep in the one going out to pasture, and in the other gathered safely in the pen; the skies of both were liquid and silvery.

JOHN FORBES WHITE

When the noble 'Drenthe' arrived in Aberdeen, George Reid, whose artistic career was just beginning, was sent for at once, and he, too, fell under its spell. In 1866, by J. F.'s instigation and arrangement, he went to Utrecht to study under Mollinger, a visit which had a far-reaching influence on his artistic evolution. In 1867 J. F. asked Mollinger to approach Israels about a picture for his growing collection. Mollinger wrote: 'J'ai été, il y a longtemps, à Amsterdam pour parler à Israels de votre commande mais je suis venu pour une porte fermée. Il était avec sa femme à Groningen. Un voisin qui était chargé avec les commissions, les lettres, etc. etc., m'avait dit qu'il restera tout l'été là-bas. Alors je lui ai écrit et il m'a répondu qu'il fera un tableau dans ce genre et avec tous les soins possibles pour vous.' In the same letter, written in July, Mollinger tells of his coming visit to Aberdeen: 'Je suis très occupé avec vos tableaux et je crois de venir à Aberdeen dans le commencement du mois d'août, quand le temps vous convient.' In the same month Artz wrote to J. F.: 'Moi aussi j'ai reçu avec plaisir les bonnes nouvelles de notre ami Mollinger. J'espère qu'il aura du beau temps chez vous, mais je suis sûr que vous vous amuserez ensemble.' But it was not to be. His health was always precarious, and one day, shortly after this letter was written, he burst a blood-vessel and fell down dead in one of the shaded alleys

JOHN FORBES WHITE

of Utrecht. Thirty years afterwards, when a Scottish painter was painting a 12-foot canvas of the great view of the winding Don flowing by the Cathedral towers, J. F. deplored that Mollinger had not lived to immortalize it. Such had been his dream. On hearing of the sad calamity J. F. at once went over to Holland and brought back with him a host of canvasses and drawings which he sold amongst his friends in Scotland, remitting to the painter's relatives a much larger sum than the sale of the pictures in Holland would have realized. This explains why Mollinger is so often to be found in the North when he is almost unknown in England.

Visits to Holland became more and more frequent, and J. F. was a welcome friend in all the studios. Beside the Mollingers and several Isaacs, a Mauve, a Roelofs, and some splendid Bosbooms were added to his treasures. It was his joy to get his pictures from the artists themselves; hence the extraordinary interest of his collection. Every picture had a personal note. He could not bear the thought of intermediary dealers. When George Reid was studying in Holland he sent him to Jacob Maris to try and get one of his landscapes. Hearing that Maris was under contract to supply a dealer with all his work, he offered to settle with the dealer and release the painter.

A nice incident about one of his Bosbooms

JOHN FORBES WHITE

happened in after years. It was a glowing little oil of 'The Baker's Church in Haarlem,' a symphony of browns and golds and sunlight, and it was lent by him to the Glasgow International Exhibition in 1888, where it attracted much attention and was reproduced in the fine catalogue. It was bought from him later by Mr. Drucker, the benefactor of both the National Gallery and the Ryks Museum, Amsterdam. He carried it immediately to Sir Charles Holroyd, the then keeper of the National Gallery. 'I have just acquired the loveliest little Bosboom in oils that ever was seen,' cried he, holding out his parcel. 'Don't speak to me of Bosbooms,' was the answer. 'The most perfect one I ever saw was at the International Exhibition in Glasgow.' Mr. Drucker tore off the paper and Sir Charles saw the picture he had long dreamt of and begged to have it for the Gallery, where it now hangs.

In 1870 Israels paid a visit to Seaton Cottage. A noteworthy portrait of him, now in the Aberdeen Art Gallery, commemorates the time. George Reid began a three-quarter length of the admired Dutchman, and Chalmers and Cameron both worked upon it. At the last sitting Israels seized the brush exclaiming, 'Now I will show you what Rembrandt would do,' and added some masterly strokes. On the brown sleeve was inscribed in red letters: 'A notre ami, White,' and the signatures of the four artists. J. F. took his

JOHN FORBES WHITE

guest along with Chalmers and Cameron to Braemar and down the Spital of Glenshee. On the top of the coach going to Braemar Israels made a sketch of the portrait he was eager to do of Grandmamma White. This was carried out later, chiefly from photographs, and was not entirely successful. When the glowing purple moors were reached Israels cried out, 'Ah, now I see where you Scottish painters get your colours!'

The introduction of this foreign Art and of the painters themselves brought a tremendous impetus to the young Scottish School who seemed to focus round J. F. Consciously or unconsciously many of them were influenced by the fine examples they saw. J. F. considered Mollinger a link between Rembrandt and the most modern Dutch School, and his low-toned canvasses had already started Reid and a few others in a similar mode of treatment. 'It was thus,' Mr. W. D. M'Kay writes in his *History of the Royal Scottish Academy*, 'by way of Holland that the movement founded on a systematic recognition of values, which had commenced in Paris about the middle of the century, first reached this country.' Mollinger's method of work was novel to the young Scottish group. From a series of rapidly done 'Tone-studies,' he completed the picture in the studio. It is interesting to know that Reid's large landscape,

JOHN FORBES WHITE

'The Willows'—painted under Mollinger's influence in Utrecht—was greeted with a storm of adverse criticism when it was exhibited in Edinburgh. The orthodox, led by Sir George Harvey, the then President, were 'very hard on it.'

When J. F. bought a fine 'Diaz,' a bouquet of glowing colour, one and all began to paint flowers and tried to catch the brilliant freshness. George Reid succeeded in his luminous 'Roses' painted at white heat in a few hours. The great 'Corot' inspired Chalmers, and his silvery 'Autumn Morning' was painted after a rapturous study of 'The Souvenir d'Italie.' To J. F. belongs the credit of bringing the first Corot to Scotland. 'Who is GROTE?' said a sneerer, trying to make something out of the bold unknown signature! and J. F. used to quote with amusement the request of some unseeing neighbour, 'Would you just kindly tell me what you *see* in this picture!' When he had to part with it in after years he wrote down the answer in his heart's blood:

'The great Corot. (68 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 56 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.)

"Souvenir d'Italie." 26th Feb. 1892.

'This is the last day of the Corot on my walls. To-morrow it comes down to be packed for Glasgow.' (It now hangs in the Glasgow Corporation Gallery.) 'It has been my friend and adviser for eighteen years, my standard of ideal,

JOHN FORBES WHITE

yet true, landscape; true because it conveys accurately and fully a great amount of the facts and appearances of Nature, yet ideal because it is the composition of a great artist, selecting and subordinating. The human eye is here rather than the lens of the camera. The heart of the painter rejoices in his work; we can hear Corot, *le bon père Corot*, singing as he painted this picture in his old age. He was born in 1796. This picture was exhibited in the Salon of '73, so the painter must have been about seventy-five when he wrought this fairy work, fairy not only in conception but in its facile ease, its exuberant joy. The knowledge of a lifetime is concentrated here; the gathered-up fruits of his close study of Nature lie before us. The hard minuteness of detail of his early days has gone, he has come to understand the heart of Nature and how to reach it. He has entered on the third stage of the great artist, having passed, unheeded, unacknowledged, through his early stages of severe study, and also through that of the growing strength of manhood, even then unappreciated except by a few. Now in his ripe years he is master of light, air, breadth, simplicity, and harmony. Looked at close by the work is that of a sketcher; no detail is given, but at a fair distance the work is that which we see in Nature, satisfying and complete. Suggestion and largeness of manner, conscious yet modest confidence, ease

JOHN FORBES WHITE

without bravura, assurance without affectation, love and peace in the painter's heart, all are apparent. The pulse of the sympathetic observer beats in harmony with that of the painter, he enters into his feelings and can smile with delight over this picture of the early dawn of a golden age, when life was joy unclouded by sin or suffering. It is early morning; the rosy-fingered dawn is seen in the amber-touched cloud that floats lightly over the grey lake and the villa on the height. The mist lies on the bosom of the olive-covered hill beyond the great trees and their open arches under which four Nymphs dance and play the tambourine in the abandon of the joy of life. On the left in the foreground pirouettes a young faun as he leaps in the air and clashes his cymbals. Resting from the dance lies a stately Nymph, a half-nude classic figure on a red mantle. We are back in the haunts of the Dryads and Nereids; we live with Theocritus in Sicily. It is a life free from care and responsibility—a dream of early Greek legend. We can hear the birds twitter in the great branches of the trees, and the murmur of the brook hastening to the sea is in our ears, and the autumnal sparse leafage quivers in the morning breeze. It is not a picture we are looking at—it is a dream of classic story. The pulse quickens under its influence. We are back in the old world of Sappho and Alcaeus, of Horace and Virgil.

JOHN FORBES WHITE

I let it go with a mixture of joy and sorrow. Joy that it has been to us a source of pure pleasure and because my judgment is confirmed. But parting with a friend always brings pain.'

Next day this was added: 'The picture is now out of its frame, ready for packing in separate box. Close at hand it can be looked into more carefully, and the method of work and the extent to which Corot wished to carry it can be seen. The upper corners of the canvas are scarcely covered with paint, all is thin—first intention; no attempt to carry it beyond this rapid spontaneous action. The clouds in flecks are put in by one dexterous sweep of the wrist. The splendid cloud overhanging the lake is a confused mass of dove, rose, amber, yellow and grey, which at a fair distance resolves itself into lovely colour. The leafage is put in with rapid sure touches, and the blue and red flowers are touched in with perfect knowledge of effect. All is suggestive; a master revelling in the fantasie he is playing, in the harmony he is evolving. He is a creator. One wonders whether it would have been better or worse had he laboured more in the work. A gain in one direction might have been a loss in another. As it stands it is a marvel of spontaneous artistic freedom and individuality. J. F. W.'

A humorous allusion to his love for the Corot was woven into rhyme by an artist friend, on the

JOHN FORBES WHITE

occasion of a dance being given in the picture-room. The guests were begged to have a care for the pictures, and the warning verses ended thus,

For if a spot appeared upon Corot,
A scratch on Mollinger's resplendent sky,
No joy again our Hostess e'er would know,
And Mr. White, ah! Mr. White would die!

A smaller Corot of rich enamelled surface was also one of his especial delights.

Between 1870 and 1880 the happy fraternity of young Scottish painters and J. F. was in fullest vigour. Commissions flowed from him; sympathy and enthusiasm overflowed. George Reid had painted 'Grandmamma White' in the sixties, when she had remarked pawkily, 'I wonder you let John see you at work, he might steal your trade!' and from that time onwards he had done delightful portraits of some of the children. There was Alice under the rhododendron bush, and Aitchie with a croquet mallet, and Hermann in black velvets, and Ina in a scowl and brigand-looking felt hat. There was also a charmingly poetical head of Mrs. White, full of suggestion and tenderness, and a Rembrandtish one of J. F. The 'Broadsea' and the 'Whins in Bloom,' both large important landscapes, were also done in these early years, before Reid's hand was for ever employed in painting portraits.

A letter from him to J. F., dated 1872, reveals how the love of landscape tugged at his heart.

JOHN FORBES WHITE

He writes from his early Edinburgh studio in Duke Street: 'I fear somehow I am to be let in for a portrait of Mr. —— of ——. What is to be done, am I to turn into a portrait painter pure and simple, or not? Looking out at the window, away over to those Fife hills, white with snow, glowing in the warm light of evening, I feel this portrait painting is a bondage. I must get out of it or half the pleasure I have in life will go, and anything of good I may have attained to in painting a head will go too. I begin to loathe the thing, having had a surfeit of it for some time past. How I should like to have a six months' respite from it, away in the open fields, with no A——s, no B——s, no C——s, no nobody to do, needing no money, no nothing—only peace and quietness and permission to paint when and where you liked. But I suppose it's no use, I have got into the rut somehow and there seems no way of getting out of it.'

'That hill with the warm light on the snow must be the one just above Loch Leven. How splendid the place must be looking from the little wooden pier beside the boat-house! Had I the wings of a dove I should make my way over before its glory passed and—well—to return to more carnal matters, dinner is on the table so I must stop.'

In 1873 Chalmers stayed with the Whites from September to February, while he was paint-

JOHN FORBES WHITE

ing 'The End of the Harvest' for J. F. It was a theme such as Millet would have chosen. The pathos and toil of the labourer's life seemed woven into the landscape. Under the shadow of the belt of trees two women—one very old and bent—were taking up the last few bags of potatoes. The sun had set in gold behind the trees, a cloud overhung the scene; all was quiet and solemn and suggestive of the evening of life. The picture is now in the collection of Mr. Andrew Carnegie.

The next year brought forth Chalmers' lovely child portrait 'Aitchie.' This was exhibited some years ago in London at the Exhibition of Fair Children and was greatly admired. A celebrated painter once soliloquized before it: 'It is so human, so tender, *very* wonderful—it has the perfect formation of a child's forehead. There's a tenderness in it. The tip-top of child's portraiture is Rembrandt's "William of Orange." This is like a Rembrandt.' And later J. F. was to write of Chalmers' portraits:

'It is easy to see what love of colour and of light he lavished on the flowing hair of a girl, or an old man's beard such as you find in some of Rembrandt's portraits, or in Sir Joshua's "Cherubs," or most tenderly of all perhaps, in the Louvre picture of the "Infanta Margareta," that child portrait of which Chalmers never spoke but with wonder and despair, yet works by him





JOHN FORBES WHITE

could be named which, if they did not satisfy himself as to these highest qualities of the painter's art, still show how near he came to the lofty standard he had set up to test his own aspirations.'

The difficulty with Chalmers was in knowing when to stop. He was in danger of ruining every canvas. 'I have been labouring at "The Legend,"' he wrote to a friend, 'and found that the composition was so bad that it positively would not come—in fact it would not finish. I have therefore scraped the half of it out. God knows if ever I will be able to make a picture of it now.' As J. F. said, 'The result of all this was that many of his important pictures may be said to be the tombs of previous paintings.' J. F. used to describe an exciting scene in the studio when he and George Reid tied poor Chalmers to a chair and, holding a red-hot poker nearer and nearer to his nose, made him swear that he would not put another stroke to the picture they were determined to save. The last 'Chalmers' added to J. F.'s collection was the great 'Staircase.' 'The Legend' is in the Edinburgh National Gallery.

Hugh Cameron painted charming heads of two of the children and a very sweet homely scene called 'Going to the Well.' From Archie Reid came a lovely landscape, 'Boys wading,' which might have passed for an 'Israels,' while

JOHN FORBES WHITE

W. D. M'Kay and others added their notes to the Scottish symphony. Later on came Orchardson's idyllic and stately 'Farmer's Daughter,' now also in the Glasgow Corporation Gallery, and 'The Highland Funeral,' a noble early work by the future President, Sir James Guthrie. Many were the happy gatherings in those times. Many a day did they 'Tire the sun with talking and send him down the sky.' Then there was a great annual festival of fun and frolic which was called 'The Academy of Deer.' This was an evening spent with the Rev. James Peter, the art-loving minister of Old Deer, Aberdeenshire. It was always held the day after the pictures had been despatched to the R. S. A. All worries were over and a night of happy revelry could be looked forward to. Mr. Peter was dubbed 'The Abbot.' One of the rules of 'The Academy' was that each member had to compose and sing an original song. One of Archie Reid's became a classic. A special feature of the suppers was a mighty cod, which used to be caught in beautiful Gamrie Bay a few hours before it appeared on the hospitable board. On one occasion a ling had to be substituted and Archie had been apprized of the change beforehand. In his song he made a wily old cod give utterance to the sublime sentiment, 'Self-sacrifice is a noble thing, I'll send one of my own relations.' He then persuaded a half-witted ling, a cousin of his, to swallow the bait, having

JOHN FORBES WHITE

cajoled him by the promise of a sight of John F. White and other celebrities! And so, ended up the song,

That's how the Abbot of Deer
Instead of cod got ling.

Into this unclouded dayspring came the sudden thunderbolt in 1878 of the death of George Paul Chalmers, perhaps the most brilliant of the band. He had been in Edinburgh for the opening banquet of the R.S.A. and afterwards had joined in lively discussions on Art at the Artists' Club. J. F. and he left together towards midnight and they parted in Charlotte Square. Next morning he was found unconscious down a stone area. He was taken to the Royal Infirmary, but never regained consciousness. In his delirium he murmured, 'Oh, painting's grand; do you paint?' The disaster remains forever a mystery. I remember the sad wire coming to Aberdeen: 'Alas, alas, poor Chalmers is dead,' and our childish grief at losing such a friend. 'Love to the bairns' was always the last word in his letters. J. F. and another devoted friend, Mr. Alexander Gibson, at once set to work to make a worthy memorial of the gifted painter, and a volume appeared the next year containing a biography by Gibson and a critical account of his works by J. F., both done *ex corde*. George Reid supplied a drawing of the noble domed head, which Rajon etched for the frontispiece. The book was warmly received.

JOHN FORBES WHITE

Israels sent a delightful if somewhat incoherent letter (the spelling and punctuation are deliciously his own).

“THE HAGUE,” 1 January 1880.

‘DEAR FRIENDS—When we received first the book of Chalmers, and a day afterwards your kind letters, we were exceedingly struckt and terrified by the *malheur* at Dundee (the Tay Bridge disaster). We shall be glad to receive very soon a letter from you to hear that nobody of yours or of our friends where in that train. I believe that the fabrication of such a great work as the bridge upon the Tay should not be left in the hands of some people and more certainty should be taken about it.

‘Your book about Chalmers is an original piece of work. I believe that only in a cercle as yours, lovers of art and of the painters themselves such a book can come to light and indeed it honours the painters as well as you and your country. The blue outside, title and particularly the things off Reid and the portrait of Chalmers are very fine. Rajon is an splended etcher. The lines of the village of Montrose (Chalmers’ birth-place) is characteristically Reid’s. I like it much. Paper and printing are artistic and chosen. Gibson’s article has given me much pleasure. If you see that gentleman give him my compliments, he must have much talent as a writer.

JOHN FORBES WHITE

It is impossible to my opinion to do such a seemingly tedious subject without so few interesting points so well harmonious and pleasant. I find it a master-piece in his way.

'Your task as you write yourself was still more difficult but I congratulate you that you did it so well. Often I thought when I was reading it, Mr. White needs only to take colours and brushes he can paint; otherwise it is not well to do to write about the matter as you did my friend but how shall it be otherwise. When you are a rich amateur to buy what you like, a fine gentleman to receive painters in your own lodgings and an unwearied talker to pour them out till late at night, to hear their secrets of their secret art. I remember always that I was much struckid once in Amsterdam before a little picture by Rosa Bonheur that you explained to Mrs. White why a little light was put there on the ground as a *contre-point* of the light in the sky. I thought before that only artists could know that. Let us hear that you where not in that train at Dundee and believe us all to be your truly friends.

JOSEF ISRAELS.'

Dr. John Brown, 'the beloved physician' and author, wrote to a friend: 'How well the great miller writes! If he mills as well as he writes everybody should go to his mill.' In his enthusiasm he sent the volume to Ruskin, and was

JOHN FORBES WHITE

deeply chagrined by the cold reception it received. It is not hard to imagine that an unknown Northern colourist would make but small appeal to the mighty but narrow-minded critic. Ruskin's letter has disappeared, but 'Rab's' two on the subject show pretty clearly that the criticism must have been decidedly unpleasant.

'Jan. 5th, 1880.

'MY DEAR JOHN WHITE—Your wise and good-natured and hearted letter is a real comfort to me. You have the *mens aequa* which too few have. It still remains in my mind as painful and utterly unjustifiable. I hope good George is as good as you about it. I'll say nothing about it to anybody for Ruskin's sake. No one has seen it except my brother Alex., who is safer than most, and Gibson. You will think it strange, but I have not yet fully read your bit. I'll do so to-night. I have been so upset with this *bêtise* of a letter. Nicolson's was too short (the *Scotsman's* review by Sheriff Nicolson), but good in the main, as far as I can judge, without reading yours thoroughly. I had merely glanced in my wild way. I don't like the portrait and I never liked the *talons*. Montrose is exquisite and the getting-up perfect. Thanks again for your goodness in this matter.—Yours and Mrs. White's and the children's, ever affectionately,

J. BROWN.'

JOHN FORBES WHITE

And then, written the following day, came:

‘MY DEAR FRIEND AND ARISTARCH (for you are one)—I have just finished it, and am grateful to you for it. So much clear, clean thinking, true and delicate feeling, and such a knowledge and power of expression. It has the *justesse* T. Rousseau speaks of—a very rare gift. If it has a fault, it is that it is too good, too elaborate, and supposes on the part of the reader as much technical and aesthetic faculty as in the writer. I wish there were more such writings to be had in the market-place. All the references to other painters seem to me very happy, and pages 58 and 59 are to the quick. It is impossible Ruskin could have read the monograph when he wrote that letter, which let us send to the land of forgetfulness, but I cannot forgive him. I like your sketches of the pictures that I know—your “Potato Field,” “The Ford.” Where is the “Pass of Leny”? I hope it is as good as your words. Altogether it is a strong and pathetic tribute to your friend. I may break out again, meantime thanks for your this morning’s letter and for this delightful piece.—Believe me, yours affectionately,

J. B.’

Here is the word-picture alluded to: ‘Other aspects of nature that had special charms for Chalmers were the stormy sky and the driving

JOHN FORBES WHITE

mist, or the mountain gloom with its mysterious depths. A fine example of his treatment of this latter sort of landscape is to be found in the splendid though unfinished picture, "The Pass of Leny," where he makes the great ash-trees, with their yellow-green foliage, stand out boldly against the purple hillside, a favourite harmony, for it occurs in several of his works. The purple is repeated, but in a lighter tone, in the boldly painted old dyke formed of the violet gneiss rocks of Ben-Ledi, wet with rain and full of bloom. Everything tells of the storm that is past, but there is an opening in the cloud over the shoulder of the mountain, and a promise of better weather. It is this change which Chalmers has succeeded in representing so grandly. Even the sheep on the roadside seem more at ease.'

About the same time the good Doctor wrote again:

'DEAR VICTORIOUS MILLER AND M.A.—Thanks for your pleasant letter. How do you find time to do more than everything? I, having nothing to do, do less than nothing. Thanks for that dear little woman and her cap, your Miss Penelope Boothby. I heard from Barclay that he had heard the dinner was first-rate, mentally and bodily. As to the drawing, what can I say (not what ought I) but that I am too weak to say "No," and yet it is all wrong altogether. I read

JOHN FORBES WHITE

your "Hadrian" to-day at Andrew Coventry's. It is good. One of the best, compact and vernacular, "stark" is the word. Have you seen Sellar's "Roman Poetry of the Augustan age"? If not, make *placens uxor* present you with it.—Yours and hers, ever and much, J. BROWN.

'I see Smiles' *Edward* is in its 5th 1000.'

Dr. Smiles had paid a visit to Seaton Cottage while he was collecting material for his *Life of Thomas Edward*, the Banffshire naturalist. George Reid did the illustrations, including a portrait of Edwards, which was etched by Rajon. Smiles wrote in after years: 'I have many sweet and tender recollections of Seaton Cottage and the pleasant times I spent there years ago.' Rajon was a happy visitor also. The 'Hadrian' referred to is J. F.'s translation of the dying Emperor's 'Address to his Soul':

Animula vagula blandula
Hospes comesque corporis
Quae nunc abibis in loca?
Pallidula, rigida, nudula;
Nec ut soles dabis jocos.

Mr. David Johnston had just brought out a volume of renderings of it by fifty scholars, including Byron, Christina Rossetti, Dean Merivale, Principal Shairp and Lord Neaves. J. F.'s runs thus:

JOHN FORBES WHITE

Dear Soul! thou sportive winsome thing,
That shar'st my frame, thy present home!
But what thy bourn when thou unhoused,
Bloodless, and stark, and stiff shalt roam
Nor any more thy jokes shall fling?

Besides Alexander Gibson and the painters there were many other friends who belonged to J. F.'s art-loving circle. There was Irvine Smith, known for his fine collection of Turner drawings, which were kept in a wardrobe and produced from time to time for inspection. He had also a collection of Persian rugs, and it was said that he crept about on all fours to enjoy them. He had an intimate knowledge of Sir Walter Scott's MSS., and I remember his coming to Dundee to decipher one of the Wizard's letters which had been found in a rag-bag. Then there was Robertson Smith, the brilliant Oriental scholar, who was hounded out of the Free Kirk for his so-called heretical opinions, and received with open arms and honours by the University of Cambridge. There was the Reverend Alexander Thompson, U.P. minister of Haddington, called by his friends 'The Revd. Sancho Panza,' whose inimitable telling of Scotch stories, heightened by the mobility of his dear grotesquely ugly face, would keep his audience in peals of laughter. There was David Gill, then the Director of Lord Crawford's private Observatory at Dunecht, Aberdeenshire, and afterwards Astronomer-Royal at

JOHN FORBES WHITE

the Cape, and destined to receive every honour that Science could bestow. There was James Bryce, afterwards Lord Bryce, then known as the author of *The Holy Roman Empire*, and who was Member for South Aberdeen. There were Prof. George Chrystal, the mathematician, and Dr. Walter Smith, the preacher-poet, and last, though by no means least, there was Alexander Nicolson, the genial Celtic giant. Nicolson in these days had an easy-going billet as Sheriff-Substitute of Kirkcudbright, into which he had happily slipped. In some humorous lines he depicted his relief in escaping from the Brief-hunting worries of the Parliament House, and his joy at becoming a 'county swell.' Later on he unfortunately allowed himself to be translated to Greenock, where his dreamy Celtic nature was quite unable to cope with crime and continual cases. His passion was for Celtic language and literature. His *forte* was in singing the songs of his beloved land. Few eyes were undimmed when he would croon with indescribable pathos his own verses:

My heart is yearning for thee, O Skye,
Dearest of Islands;
There first the sunlight gladdened my eye,
On the sea sparkling;
There doth the dust of my dear ones lie
In the old graveyard.

Many a poor black cottage is there,
Grimy with peat smoke,

JOHN FORBES WHITE

Sending up in the soft evening air
Purest blue incense,
While the low music of psalm and prayer
Rises to Heaven.

Kind were the voices I used to hear
Round such a fireside,
Speaking the Mother tongue old and dear,
Making the heart beat
With endless tales of wonder and fear,
Or plaintive singing.

Reared in those dwellings have brave ones been,
Brave ones are still there.
Forth from their darkness on Sunday I've seen
Coming pure linen.
And like the linen, the souls were clean
Of them that wore it.

Blessings be with ye, both now and aye,
Dear human creatures!
Yours is the love that no gold can buy,
Nor time can wither.
Peace be to thee and thy children, O Skye!
Dearest of islands!

Great were the nights when 'Sherry' came to us bravely clad in kilt and sporran and dirk.

All these and many others used to gather in summer on the lawn at Seaton Cottage, and in winter in the picture room in Union Street. Unfortunately there was no Boswell to chronicle the talk! Arthur Melville, the water-colourist, said in after years that the Cottage contained all the qualifications mentioned in a little poem of R. L. Stevenson:

JOHN FORBES WHITE

Go, little Book, and wish to all
Flowers in a garden, meat in the Hall,
A bin of wine, a spice of wit,
A house with lawns encircling it,
A living river at the door,
A nightingale in the sycamore.

Certainly everything tallied except the nightingale, and instead there were the far more heavenly thrush and blackbird. J. F. used to say that one individual thrush had sung on the same branch for forty years!

And let the late Dean of Aberdeen, Dr. Danson, describe one of the winter *Noctes Ambrosianae*. He wrote: 'The evenings I have spent in your old home in Union Street are among my happiest recollections. If ever in my life I have been brought into sympathy with Beaumont's experiences at "The Mermaid," it was there. For there I

. . . . heard words that have been
So nimble and so full of subtle flame,
As if that every one from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life. . . .

'I wonder if you remember the night when Bain (Dr. Alexander Bain, the famous Professor of Logic), Bryce, Robertson Smith, George and Archie Reid, Dove Wilson (Professor of Law), Dyce Davidson, and myself smoked the dining-room into such a *densitas caliginis* that when a

JOHN FORBES WHITE

new man was introduced he could not find a living soul at the table. It was upon that same night that Bain declared that there was no free thought in Aberdeen until Principal Dewar wrote his *Evidences of Christianity*, a sentiment which convulsed George Reid almost to choking.'

To return to J. F. After the publication of the *Life of Chalmers* a period of literary activity set in. In the same year he wrote a comprehensive and discriminating article for *The Contemporary Review* on George Mason, the poetic painter whose work he admired enormously. To him 'The Harvest Moon' and 'The Evening Hymn' ranked higher than 'The Harbour of Refuge' or 'The Gateway' of Mason's gifted contemporary, Frederick Walker. It is somewhat strange but gratifying that the article on Mason remains the last word on that youthful genius.

The *Contemporary Review* also published some trenchant notes on the Royal Academy. They were fairly severe as can be gathered from a letter of Woolner's, the sculptor, but Sir Frederick Leighton anyhow was pleased with his share of the criticism. He wrote:

'DEAR MR. WHITE—Thanks for your amiable note. I do not, on principle, read criticisms, but I understand that most people attack my reading of Cymon. I am pleased that you have understood why I have treated him as I have, shewing

JOHN FORBES WHITE

him as *already illuminated*. I had another and further reason, I wished the picture to impress the spectator as a whole as he (Cymon) was impressed by Iphigenia, a chord was to be struck in which there was to be no jar, beauty was *if possible* to emanate from the whole canvas. In much haste, yours very truly, FREDERICK LEIGHTON.'

Woolner's letter alludes to the two publications.

'DEAR MR. WHITE—I have read your articles with great interest. I do not wonder the artists were not best pleased with your remarks upon their works. I must also say that I was especially gratified with both the subtle observations you made upon the beauties of nature and the skilful way in which you expressed them. But it was the article on Mason most delighted me. You see clearly the happy combination of nature with poetic rendering that characterises that richly gifted artist. I think if gentlemen of culture and appreciation for Art would more often follow your good example and give artists their views as to the purposes of Art it would do them good, as indicating that keen eyes are watching their efforts and thus tend towards keeping them up to the Plimsoll mark!

'I feel sure your Poole article will be both amusing and instructive and will also show that it is the poetic order of artists that most affect

JOHN FORBES WHITE

you. I remember my evening at your hospitable house with great pleasure, and I beg you will give my kind remembrances to Mrs. White and your daughters.—Very truly yours,

‘THOMAS WOOLNER.’

The articles in the *Contemporary* drew attention to the new writer, and the Editor of *The Academy* wrote and asked J. F. to become their Art Critic. This he declined, feeling he lived too far away from the centre of things.

In these years and during all his full life travel was an undiluted joy to J. F. His spirits rose as soon as he got into a railway carriage and *atra cura* would be left behind. Every country visited added to the wealth of his richly stored mind. He seemed to get into the hearts of places and people. ‘Look at people like pictures, *in the best light*,’ he would say, ‘and you’ll always find good in them.’

Holland, ‘the birthplace of painted light,’ Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France (every corner of it), Italy, Austria, Spain were all familiar to him, and in later years Russia, Egypt, Greece, and Turkey were added. In Italy he formed a friendship with the Montalba family. He had already corresponded with Miss Clara Montalba, and possessed one of her drawings. In Venice he was present with her at a ceremony in St. Mark’s of ‘The Installation of

JOHN FORBES WHITE

the Patriarch,' and he begged her to paint the scene for him. The result was a beautiful mellow water-colour. In the foreground was the crowded church, while in a golden glow of sun- and candle-light the architectural forms, veiled but yet felt in the mysterious gloom and the palpable clouds of incense, rose behind the white figure of the enthroned Patriarch. Miss Montalba wrote after the visit: 'I am so glad that you have ceased to be *incognito*, and that I can think of you as you really are without having to imagine all sorts of improbable envelopes for your inner selves!'

J. F. had asked her to look up a picture he was greatly interested in, which was not mentioned in the guide-books. He was sure it was an unknown Tintoretto. 'We have just been to see your Tintoretto,' continues the letter, 'and a real one it is and most beautiful in colour. It has always been in that same place, and the custodian said that about two months ago a committee was sent to inspect the picture and report on its merits and value.'

Some years later she wrote: 'Hilda and I are very pleased, not to say proud, of our Dundee beginning, and are delighted to see that your friendly hand waves its protecting influence from one end of Scotland to the other.'

In 1880 J. F. was elected as Assessor for the General Council to the Aberdeen University Court, a post he held for eight years, being re-

JOHN FORBES WHITE

elected after his four years' term of office. Being a true Hellenist, he was also keenly interested in Science and aware of her growing requirements in the way of a wider curriculum and new opportunities for research. He threw himself vigorously into the scheme for the greatly needed extension of Marischal College. In recognition of his academic services and scholarship his Alma Mater conferred on him the degree of LL.D.

In 1884 Robertson Smith was made joint Editor of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. He had once said of J. F., 'Mr. White is not a scholar, he doesn't pretend to be one, but he is one of the most scholarly men I know.' He now wrote and asked Mrs. White 'to persuade her husband' to write an article by the month of June on his friend the painter Poole.' J. F. had a tremendous admiration for Poole's work, and had bought one of his great landscapes, 'The Giant's Cavern.' Poole always painted in the *grande manière*, and when Burlington House had a posthumous one-man show of his works, J. F. declared he was the one artist of the time who could stand such a test. After a visit to Seaton Cottage Poole went North to seek for Caverns. The following letter is amusing and throw slight on the landscapist:

'KINLOCHAWE HOTEL, ROSS-SHIRE,
'July 25th, 1875.

'MY DEAR MR. WHITE—On our return yester-
62

JOHN FORBES WHITE

day from the head of Loc [*sic*] Maree I found my hair brush and tooth brush: I had no idea when I left Seaton Cottage that these useful articles were mine.

'We left this place on Tuesday for Poolewe by way of Gairloch. We remained one night at Poolewe, a very cheerful place open to the Bay, yesterday we walked three miles to the head of the loc and although we bespoke a boat the night before we found that the shore was boatless; however we succeeded at last in being shipped or boated, and on passing a kind of bluff or headland we were told that was the cave that I had come 600 miles to see. I saw no appearance of a cave, I think I may say we have been sold. Mr. Phillip, son of the late John Phillip, says we were humbugged by the boatmen. Fearing my friends would think I had caves on the brain I agreed to their proposal and we rowed on to Loc Maree Hotel and then on a car to this place. We went on Monday to Loc Torridon, a sea lake—a very beautiful place, very hot but tempered with a delicious sea breeze. I have found no use for flannels that a friend advised my bringing with me. I have been, altho' minus the cave, very much pleased with the excursion. There is a mine of material for the landscape painter when the weather is favourable; it is either a hot haze hiding all character in the hills or when they are seen under a paintable effect you are

JOHN FORBES WHITE

devoured by the midges. They penetrate into eyes, nose, ears. I have tried the alum water but it is a failure. We are always talking of our friends in Aberdeen; the favourite topic. I am ordered to give my friends' kind remembrance to Mrs. White and yourself. Accept the same from, faithfully yours, P. F. POOLE.'

Another interesting 'cavernous' letter from Poole says: 'There is a tale of Hogg's interested me much in which is described a remarkable cavern in a romantic country. I have not the book at hand but I will again read it. I made a note of it at the time, it is the King's son's cave in the County of the M'Kenzies, St. Mary's Loch, North Highlands; some legendary tale. I have always had a great love for caverns "the abode of mystery," Polyphemus; the witches' cave in Macbeth; the cave of Mammon of Spenser. There is a remarkable cavern at or near Ingleton in Yorkshire.' And in yet another plans are discussed for Poole and two of his friends to meet J. F. at Inverness, after which they are to be his guests during a fortnight's tour in the Highlands.

Important articles on Ver Meer, Rembrandt, and Velazquez, also for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, succeeded the one on Poole. The 'Velazquez' was dashed off during a fortnight's stay at Ardgour, a favourite haunt for the autumnal holiday. Needless to say, the material and knowledge

JOHN FORBES WHITE

required had been accumulating for years. Israels, ever appreciative of his early patron's work, wrote one of his delightful letters on receiving the slip copy of the 'Rembrandt.'

'To tell you the truth I forgot to speak you about the article you wrote about Rembrandt but now as you wrote me over it I read it again. Just was our mutual friend Mr. Vosmaer taking at mine a "borreltze" as you know we call a little bit of liquer of genever or brandy in one of your little glasses you made me once a present from Scotland. They are very nice and we like them very much, being the just measure a man who is not much accustomed to drink can bear one or two. We spoke together then about your knowledge of the latest discoveries about Rembrandt. Your article indeed can not be better, given the small space you had for that purpose. One thing struckd me that you seem not to know much about the Hermitage in St. Petersburg where so much fine Rembrandts are to be seen, only on one occasion you say of a nud figure who is there, but have you not seen the whole Hermitage in photographs? It is a work very voluminous and very dear but we have it here in the Royal Bibliothèque, or library as you would call it. They have it in a apart shrine so many are there and under these forty of finest Rembrandts. Your appreciation of his art is quite right and concious.'

JOHN FORBES WHITE

Many years earlier, Israels had written apprehensively: 'You will not be, I hope, from the friends of Rembrandt who found his 'Syndics' not nearly so good as his *Tulp*; *Tulp* is nice, finely painted, all clear and neat. He did it when he was young: the *Syndics* are broad, dismal-looking, not for the public, only for himself, that is the real Rembrandt, not the first, that was the young traveller in art. May I speak so to a corn-merchant? Yes, I may, then you are if you will an artist as we, and I believe you can go farther when borne by artistic friendly feelings.'

J. F. was present at the dinner given by Professor Robertson Smith on the completion of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in 1888. It was held in Christ's College, Cambridge, the then headquarters of the Editor. He wrote: 'I sat between Edmund Gosse and Professor Middleton, the Slade Professor here—both very nice, especially Gosse who was very attractive and friendly. I saw lots of people I wanted to see. Dr. Garnett of the British Museum replied for Literature. It was he who wrote me about the Poole article, we had a long talk. Then Mons. Hymans of Brussels (who did Van Dyck and Rubens) was very complimentary. He speaks English well and we spent the forenoon together in the FitzWilliam and got on remarkably well. M. Yriarte too and no end of other people.'

J. F. used to say that one of the most gratify-

JOHN FORBES WHITE

ing things that ever happened to him was Dr. Garnett's finding out from Robertson Smith *who* wrote the 'Poole' article and writing to him with great enthusiasm about it. How much more gratified would he have been could he have known that Dr. Garnett was eager to have his art writings collected in a volume with a memoir. But this unfortunately was not to be; Dr. Garnett died shortly after making the proposal.

In 1885 George Reid wrote to J. F.: 'You must be over head and ears in work just now, what with your own business and this Exhibition. Don't over-do it. You are not as young as you once were, my old and trusty friend.' But the ever-crescendoing activities were to go on for a score of years. The Exhibition alluded to was the first held in the new Art Gallery which J. F. had been greatly instrumental in building for the City of Aberdeen. He was ever ready to lend his treasures and to procure loans from his artist friends. John Pettie wrote: 'Very pleased to be represented in your first Exhibition and send you a finished sketch of "The Vigil" which was bought by the Chantrey Committee. It is not the same in some respects—a pillar more, etc. Should it remain in Aberdeen I will be pleased enough and have put a price on with that hope.' Sir John Millais wrote:

'DEAR MR. WHITE—I would help you if I

JOHN FORBES WHITE

could but I have *nothing* in my own house to lend and I have long ceased to ask for the loan of my pictures.

'I am only slowly recovering from a troublesome malady and am unable to attend to anything. I can hardly paint an hour a day.—Yours very truly,

J. E. MILLAIS.'

J. F. also threw himself heart and soul into getting up Industrial Art Exhibitions. One of the chief aims of his life was to do something in the way of bringing the treasures of Art and an understanding of them within the reach of the community. Once when despatching his Chalmers' 'Staircase,' Poole's 'Cavern' and George Reid's 'Roses' to a Whitechapel Exhibition he said, 'I've found more real taste and discrimination and feeling for Art among artisans than among any of the better classes.' On one occasion he worked into the early hours for weeks beforehand arranging cases of loans from South Kensington. He was proud of procuring a series of George Tinworth's works from Doulton's firm, and gave a lecture on the wonderful artisan-artist. Tinworth was the son of a poor wheelwright and was employed by Doulton. His terracotta bas-reliefs of sacred subjects were of great interest and beauty. The finest specimen is the reredos in York Minster. On one occasion J. F. borrowed a chronological set of Rembrandt's

JOHN FORBES WHITE

etchings from South Kensington and lectured on them, and yet another lecture was on the Tanagra figures. Dean Danson wrote: 'It was you who first drew my attention to the Tanagra Sculptures which give me new delight every time I visit Marischal College.' By J. F.'s advice a set of reproductions had been acquired there.

In 1885 the British Association paid its second visit to Aberdeen, and the guests at Seaton Cottage were Dr. John Murray of the *Challenger* Expedition (afterwards Sir John Murray) and the Abbé Renard, the famous Belgian geologist. Murray gave the Inaugural Address to a packed house on the creatures of the briny deep. We were all thrilled when, acting upon my sister's suggestion, he finished off his great speech with the lines from *The Ancient Mariner*:

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware.

JOHN FORBES WHITE

The Abbé was so well known to many of the Scotch friends that he never was a stranger, and became J. F.'s lifelong friend. His was a truly lovable nature, full of the milk of human kindness and brimming over with sympathy and geniality. He humorously described an occasion when he and Sheriff Nicolson were housed in a strict Presbyterian household at a meeting of the British Association. On the Sunday they talked theology with their host till midnight, and then the Sheriff began to sing! 'Quelle bonté d'âme!' sighed the Abbé as his tale conjured up the beloved Sheriff. Sixteen years later J. F. with one of his daughters returned the Abbé's visit, and stayed in his old-world home in Wetteren, near Ghent (what horrors may have been perpetrated there!). Features of the visit were the Tercentenary Celebrations of Vandyck (1599-1899) at Antwerp, whither the Abbé escorted the two, and an enchanting walking tour in the Ardennes. The pedestrians were told to take as little luggage as possible, and were proud of the dimensions of their 'sac' until they sighted the Abbé's minute wallet! But when he told them that he once went for a fortnight's tour with 'Six rasoirs' as his entire outfit, they felt they need not be unduly depressed. Once, too, the Abbé told them, when he and an Oxford professor were geologizing at Buxton for a week they had a wager as to who had the least luggage.

JOHN FORBES WHITE

The Abbé lost, he having 'une chemise et des chaussures,' while the other had only 'les pantouffles et un roman.' Then there was a delightful story of his being dressed like an *ouvrier* with a satchel on his back and entering an *Auberge* for a glass of beer. The landlady was sympathetic and said, 'Ah! mon pauve homme; c'est dur quand on devient vieux, de s'en aller par les chemins et de ne plus rien vendre du tout!'

In 1888 J. F. gave up the old-fashioned Kettocks Mills, which had been for so many years in his father's and his hands, and settled in Dundee to be near his large modern mill. He had a stately house, 'Craigtay,' overlooking the estuary of the Tay. The summers were still spent at Seaton Cottage. On leaving Aberdeen a handsome presentation was made by the citizens. It consisted of his own portrait painted by his old friend, now Sir George Reid, and presented to the Aberdeen Art Gallery, and three perfect pieces of old silver for Mrs. White. He himself presented to the Gallery as a parting gift his fine landscape 'Les Nénuphars,' by Roelofs.

In Dundee he was already well known, and the warmest of welcomes awaited him and his. He at once became part of the academic, civic, and social life. On hearing of the change Charles Keene of *Punch* wrote: 'How I wish I were strong enough to accept your kind invitation to

JOHN FORBES WHITE

Seaton Cottage. I heard some time ago that you had left Aberdeen, and thought what a wrench it must have been for you to forsake that little "Eden." I'm so glad to hear you still have that charming retreat in Old Aberdeen. How well I remember every inch of it. Now I'm debarred from getting out and about, the recollection and appreciation of such lovely places come upon me forcibly. I've not been able to get to any of the Exhibitions. I had an invitation to the R.A. Banquet, but was of course unable to go, and I believe it was one of the best they have had for years. Somebody was telling me that the Scotch artists Pettie, M'Whirter, Colin Hunter, etc., were all getting very fat, which shows, I hope, they are all flourishing. I fancy I have done my last work for *Punch*. Having to keep my leg up I find an irksome position for drawing, and I miss my studio and properties. I gave up the former last year, and distributed all my properties as I had no room for them here, and now I find I cannot do without them. Luckily by thrift I have saved enough that gives me a small pension, enough for board and lodging and even for my small extravagances (a book now and then). Give my kindest remembrances to Mrs. White and all yours and my Aberdeen friends who remember me. If ever I get well there is no place I should like so well to see again. I will write again soon and tell you how I get on.'

Another



JOHN FORBES WHITE

lover of Seaton Cottage was the painter, William Stott of Oldham. He had spent many weeks there in 1881 painting a full-length portrait of 'Alice,' and he wrote in after years:

'Do you know that the six weeks with you at Seaton Cottage are quite the prettiest six weeks of my life—will they ever come again? They must. I cannot, will not believe that such Eldorado days are gone for ever.'

Soon after settling in Dundee the supreme sorrow of his life fell on J. F. He sought an anodyne in work. He set himself to reawaken his neglected knowledge of Greek. He began with Homer. He ended with Homer. Every night he would do a hundred lines carefully, looking up every forgotten word. 'Listen to this,' he would exclaim, 'it's superb, I'm just coming to the bit where Achilles' shield was wrought,' or, repeating it twice, he would quote, "'He fell like an oak, or a silver poplar, or a great pine"; what *grand* lines describing the death of a noble man!' Or it would be, 'These everlasting Greeks! everything goes back to them,' or 'Homer is as good as an infinite play.' He liked Sir Henry Maine's saying, 'Except the blind forces of Nature, nothing moves in this world which is not Greek in its origin.' 'Take a note of that,' added he; 'take a note of that.' The only thing that bothered him were the accents. He used to complain that the use of Greek accents was 'one

JOHN FORBES WHITE

of the tyrannies of the day!' He considered the University life of the time too much of a cram. 'Think of the days when Englishmen used to come and listen to wide inspired men like John Wilson,' he would say. '*That* was education. In the same way I had Blackie's wide general culture.'

He felt that a large section of those who opposed classical study did so on account of the tremendous time spent on the hard barren work of dwelling on the minute details of dry grammar. He was convinced that the whole of classical history should be treated with regard to the human side. Writing to the late Headmaster of the Aberdeen Grammar School, he said:

'What is scholarship? is it a fine paper for an exam.? No, a thousand times No. It is a life—a love. Is there much of that arising from the modern University? I don't see it. It is a means to a bursary—a scholarship, a Civil Service competition. All good in their way. But as leading to learning? Where? If the Classics are to stand their ground, *except for exams.*! there must be the desire to point out the beauty of Greek literature, to get at the heart of that gifted race—to learn the secrets of their art, and comprehend their life.'

He now conceived the idea of reviving the Hellenic—or Homeric Society. A band of a score of professors, schoolmasters, business men of University training, and clergymen joined the

JOHN FORBES WHITE

ranks. He was made perpetual President. They met monthly, at first at Craigtay. Later a more central scheme was evolved and they met for a simple dinner in a hotel, and then took to pipes and Homer. The enthusiasm never flagged during his lifetime. Professor Blackie came over from Edinburgh to delight the members by his wit and wisdom. He was proud of this child of the original Mother-meeting. Other scholars came on other occasions. A happy development was an annual summer outing. The arrangements were always perfectly carried out by the President, and his exhilaration and spontaneity made them triumphantly successful. The late Lord Strathmore gave the members a warm welcome to Glamis and was made an Hon. President. Lord Elgin very fittingly threw open to them the Greek-haunted halls of his Scottish home. Other excursions were made to Edzell and St. Andrews. The last and perhaps the best was to Aberdeen. J. F. met his disciples, numbering 16, at the station, and personally conducted them over the Colleges and the Cathedral. They came by boat to Seaton Cottage, where they lunched and went back by the historic Brig o' Balgownie.

About this time, when his head was full of Homeric controversy, a visit was paid to Hall Caine in the Isle of Man. There he met the delightful Manx poet T. E. Brown. Brown had been Classical Master at Clifton for many years,

JOHN FORBES WHITE

so he was fair game for a discussion. In a letter which afterwards appeared in the volume of his published letters Brown gives a delicious account of the meeting.

'Yesterday I went to _____. A nice man there. He is an old scholar. Imagine my surprise when he began to talk most intelligently and charmingly of Homer. You might have knocked me down with a feather. Moreover, he used the compendious scholarly words which save so much trouble, lighten the atmosphere, and make one feel at home. You were quite safe in talking about the Wolfian Thesis, and calling so-and-so a Dichotomist without further periphrasis. The ceiling fairly trembled with the sounds. He was delightful, and didn't we christen the house with some pedantries in the fullness of our hearts, notwithstanding the staleness of our Hellenic vocabularies. I really felt myself twenty years younger.'

In 1894 J. F. travelled in Greece. His fellow-traveller and friend, Mr. James Cunningham, has kindly sent me the following reminiscences of the time:

'I should like to trace some image of your father as he was during our tour in Greece in the spring of 1894: the picture is still in my memory, but as if in negative, and how am I to develop it? It is so easy to recall, so hard to reproduce.

'One of his greatest charms was his copious

JOHN FORBES WHITE

and many-sided talk: yet to report his words, even if that were possible, would give a very imperfect idea of that charm, for he, more than most men of our race, made use of gesture; his whole body joined in the conversation. He had a trick of slowly throwing out his arms which was as eloquent as the shrug of the French.

‘He was an ideal travelling companion; he had the prime traveller’s virtue, the willingness to take the rough with the smooth, to make the best of people and circumstances.

‘His interests were all-comprehensive. Greek Art and Literature, in the former of which he was almost an expert, the men and women he met, horses and dogs, food and drink, were all savoured with zest. He collected friendships as other folk collect curiosities. I have never met any one, with the exception of R. L. Stevenson, who had such a gift of casual friendship.

‘We met in Athens on the 28th March. A sentence from a letter of that date runs: “At dinner I found White in great form: he knows everybody and everything already.” He spoke with enthusiasm of a fellow-traveller, a distinguished young Oxford scholar who had withdrawn to the bows of the steamer as they approached land, and had remained, as if in a trance, while the shores of Greece lifted themselves into view. Your father, I think, shared the young man’s emotion.

‘The day after my arrival we visited Cape

JOHN FORBES WHITE

Sunium with its temple of Athena. His boundless enthusiasm for Greek art and landscape revealed itself, but it was the enthusiasm of one who knew, and was never shown but at the right time and in the right way; he never bored. When we reached the temple with its thirteen marble columns, he was reminded in a distressing way of his native city, for on the architrave carved in conspicuous letters was the name "Spalding, Newburgh, Aberdeen." You can imagine his look of horror when this profanity met his eye.

'We had bought for an exorbitant sum a bottle of German beer at Laurium to drink at luncheon. He discussed with care the exact moment at which the beer should be drunk and the further question whether the maximum of enjoyment was to be had by drinking it at two draughts or three.

'He elected to visit Eleusis by an unusual route, driving from the Piraeus till the road ended, and then walking round the bay on a rough track for two or three hours. He thought that in this way we should get the scene of the battle of Salamis most clearly into our heads. He sat by the way for a long time on the "Throne of Xerxes," wrapped in his dark Inverness cape, and discoursed of the battle.

'Here we tasted for the first time the resined wine of Attica. I was so unprepared for its quinine-like flavour that I unceremoniously re-

JOHN FORBES WHITE

jected my first mouthful, but he swallowed his thoughtfully, and remarked that there was plenty of good wine to be found in the world if one had a catholic taste.

'Our tour in the Peloponnese was a very delightful one. We left the railway at Phichtia for Mycenae in a landau drawn by three horses yoked abreast; they were small, good goers, and almost thoroughbred, with beautiful heads and strong flat legs. Your father, who had a good eye for a horse, remarked on their likeness to the type of horse in the Marbles.

'From Mycenae we drove to the Heraeon, which was then being excavated by your father's friend, Dr. Waldstein. Our driver at first refused to start, insisting that the road was not fit for horses: he was right, as it turned out to be a mere right-of-way with two streaks of large stones. But we had to get on; and partly by the fearful threats of our dragoman, Papadopoulos, partly by your father's scones, aided by promise of higher pay, he was induced to start. He was a fine, stalwart fellow, and his tears of rage made him quite beautiful.

'The Heraeon was very interesting, the learned professor hospitable, and your father, never too meticulous an observer of the flight of time, had so much to discuss with his friend that it was getting dark before we set out for Nauplia. Soon we got into a long track of heavy, carse land,

JOHN FORBES WHITE

through which the horses could hardly drag the carriage. It became pitch dark, the road got softer and softer; our driver lost his head, then lost the road, and could only call on his favourite saint to be merciful to him a sinner. Three of us got out, and running the gantlet of numerous savage dogs, walked beside the carriage and propped it up from overturning at the worst places: your father, at our insistence, remained in the carriage with the lady of the party, but did not fail to encourage us by reminding us that we were in what Homer calls "the plain of Argos, nourisher of horses."

'We set out from Nauplia to cross the Peloponnes to Olympia. From Megalopolis onwards we made our journey on horseback: being four of a party, with a dragoman, cook, and three other attendants, we formed quite a cavalcade. The cook rode on in advance to prepare our lodgings, usually in private houses, and to forage for provisions. He had a battery of pots and pans jingling behind his saddle, while in front on occasion might be found a dead sucking pig and a live hen hanging on either side. In this way we fared luxuriously; your father would say after a more than usually succulent meal, "And this is what they called in Athens 'roughing it in the Peloponnes.'" Our journey through Arcadia gave him keen pleasure; the objects of his interest were many and various—the theatre at Megalopolis

JOHN FORBES WHITE

with its row of seats still perfect; grey old Bassae, the Doric temple of Apollo, standing remote amidst its glades of old oak trees, moss-covered and wreathed in mistletoe, the violet hills and surrounding plains green with young corn and gay with the blossom of the almond and many kinds of wild flowers; the vestiges of old-fashioned life, such as the semi-seclusion of the women, the old stone-built wine-presses in which the grapes are trodden, the night-watchmen calling the hours and half-hours to one another; the shepherds piping to their flocks; the voices of our men singing klepht ballads or adjuring their beasts, "Proceed, O grey horse"; "O mule"; "O red horse"; or in an extreme case, "O horse, thou art not fit to carry a lady, but only salt fish"; there was, too, a memorable country wine which we drank at Megalopolis, with the flavour of old Moselle; all these things and many more had his attention and each its due comment. At Megalopolis he had a disappointment. A dealer offered us an engraved Greek gem; the device consisted of two clasped hands and a motto of two words, somewhat defaced; the letters INNA could be distinguished, but he could think of no Greek word of which they might form a part. At last, to his disappointment but great amusement, he made out the words to be the familiar ones, "Dinna Forget."

'One Sunday evening he surprised us by his extraordinary familiarity with the Scottish para-

JOHN FORBES WHITE

phrases. He seemed to know most of them by heart.

'There was only one minor drawback to the perfect enjoyment of the journey; it arose from the shepherds' dogs. These furious brutes, nearly as big as a St. Bernard, but fiercer and more agile, rush out upon the traveller who approaches a village or solitary shepherd's hut. They are very determined; on one occasion one of them charged right up to our horses and carried off a coat which was hanging from the pommel of a saddle. The only defence is to throw stones, which generally drives them off or at least keeps them at bay till the shepherd appears. In Asia Minor, round Olympus, near Broussa, we found them afterwards still more dangerous. Sticks and stones are of no use; the traveller must sit down on the ground, cover his head with his cloak, and await deliverance at the hands of the shepherd. Even in such circumstances our Mentor found Homeric consolation. He reminded us of the scene in *Odyssey*, Bk. XIV., where the disguised Odysseus is attacked as he approached the steading of Eumaeus by "four dogs, as fierce as wild beasts," and how Odysseus "in his wariness sat him down and let the staff fall from his hand"; and how the swineherd "chid and drove them this way and that with a shower of stones."

'At Delphi, which we visited on our journey back to Athens, we were fortunate enough to be

JOHN FORBES WHITE

present at an important find. As we were being most kindly shown over the excavations by M. Homolle, the Director for the French Government, some workmen unearthed a dark brown object, which proved to be a beautiful marble head of a good period. It was a thrilling moment for every one.

'The mention of M. Homolle and his kindness leads me to say here how much the pleasure of travelling was increased for me by the many friends and acquaintances, either of recent or older date, to whom your father introduced me. Among them were Professor Gardner of the British School in Athens, Mr. and Mrs. Richardson of the American Consulate, and Professor Vambéry.

'We were lucky in the moment of arrival at Constantinople. It was about 8 o'clock of a fine April morning when we neared the city. A thin veil of mist hid it from us till we were quite near. Then the mist lifted; the domes and slender white minarets trembled into shape; the sea was dead calm, and the points of the minarets were mirrored in the water.

'Instead of staying at a hotel, your father suggested taking rooms, as he thought we should thus be less restricted as to hours of coming and going. This arrangement allowed us to ramble about Constantinople at all hours of night. We met with no adventures, but I daresay we made acquaintance with some of the sides of Con-

JOHN FORBES WHITE.

stantinople life neglected by the ordinary tourist. Your father much enjoyed these aimless rambles along the dark and almost deserted streets.

'One feature of the city life in which he took interest was the great army of dogs, which at that time did a good deal of the scavenging. These masterless creatures were formed into little packs, each with its particular beat from which they drove away all other dogs. During the day they lay about in corners, but at night they came out into the streets, and we used to stumble over them in the dark. The pack in our street numbered about eight, and got to know us quite well, giving us a welcome, when we arrived home, as certified freemen of the street.

'Among the various agreeable acquaintances your father made in Constantinople was the Art correspondent of a London daily. They happened to meet one evening and the conversation turned upon Velazquez; the stranger really knew a great deal about Velazquez, but was astonished to find that your father knew more. He afterwards asked me who on earth he was, and he became a very interesting acquaintance.

'It was our good fortune to visit St. Sophia under the guidance of Professor van Milligen. The still, austere beauty of the greatest of Christian churches, beside which even St. Peter's shows somewhat mundane, affected your father very deeply. He pointed out that the impression

JOHN FORBES WHITE

of aerial spaciousness which one receives on entering is due to the proportions of the building, which allow the eye at the moment of entrance to travel up almost to the apex of the huge dome, whereas in St. Peter's only a small arc of the dome is at first visible. I have not seen those facts mentioned in any of the books. He said, too, that of all churches he had visited the interior of St. Sophia gave him the fullest sense of the "peace of God."

'Here I end, though our journey together extended a little farther than Constantinople. The negative of which I spoke in my first sentence has come out only in parts, and these mostly trivial, but they may serve in some small degree to complete the outline of a man whom I held dear at all times during our friendship, but never more than during these happy weeks when we were together in the Near East.'

On his return J. F. flung himself into the study of Greek Art. He ever held that Greek Literature and Art went hand-in-hand, Homer and Aeschylus marching with Pheidias, and 'Euripides the human' following with Praxiteles and Scopas. His own preference was for the earlier work, and he wrote to a friend: 'Euripides coincides with the growing expression of Praxiteles and Scopas. But I confess, both in their Drama and in their plastic Art, I cling to the older aspect,

JOHN FORBES WHITE

and I am drawn rather to the nobility of Antigone than to the tenderness of Alcestis.' Mr. Humphry Ward once put before him an early head which had been discovered in a London mansion. 'I think it must be by Kalamis,' said J. F. 'Have you a divining rod in your pocket?' was the laughing response. While pouring over the Attic *Stelai*, 'the most beautiful things on earth,' he noticed a point which linked Art and Literature in a most interesting way. In several of the most touching farewell scenes he observed that it is not the right hand but the right wrist of the departed that is tenderly grasped. In his readings of Homer he was delighted to come across two passages which clearly explained that the right wrist was touched on occasions of intense emotion or deep passion. 'In a most tender passage,' he wrote, 'Penelope tells Eurymachus that, when Odysseus left for Troy, whence he might not return as the Trojans were great warriors, he bade her an affectionate farewell (*Od.* xviii. 258),

δεξιτερὴν ἐπὶ καρπῷ ἐλῶν ἐμὲ χεῖρα προσηύδα.

(“Catching me by the right hand at the wrist he spoke to me.”)

This seems exactly to describe the attitude and its pathetic significance. Another passage (*Ili.* xxiv. 671) also throws light on the subject. Achilles, yielding to the commands of the gods and con-

JOHN FORBES WHITE

quering his implacable hate, agrees to give up the dead body of Hector on the prayer of the aged Priam,

“Ως ἄρα φωνήσας ἐπὶ καρπῷ χεῖρα γέροντος
ἔλλαβε δεξιτερήν, μή πως δείσει’ ἐνὶ θυμῷ.

(“Thus speaking, he took the old man's right hand at the wrist lest he perchance should feel fear in his heart.”)

In his note on this passage Mr. Leaf says that this attitude is a mark of kindness. But it surely indicates a deeper and stronger feeling, a desire to give courage and confidence (as Homer says) to the aged king amid the dangers to which he was exposed in the camp of his enemies.’

The *Hellenic Journal* published his Note on the subject. A scholar remarked that its only fault was its brevity. Tree was acting ‘Ulysses’ at the time, and was glad to have his attention drawn to the significant attitude. A passage from a letter of J. F.’s, alluding to this point and forecasting what was ‘simmering’ in his mind, comes in appropriately here.

‘Why is there no museum of Greek casts in Aberdeen? Has not Greek Art done as much for the world as Greek Literature? Yet British scholars neglect the precious legacy of beauty, the greatest the world ever saw. There is no greater pedant than your pure scholar. Strange that it

JOHN FORBES WHITE

should have been left to me to point out the connection in Homer with a peculiar Greek attitude and to explain its significance. Your scholars don't care for Art, and your artists don't care for Greek, yet the Greek mind, that lovely emanation from Heaven, was one and undivided. We cut and carve it like a corpse in a dissecting room, great in our knowledge of muscles and nerves and blind to its living beauty.'

When studying his beloved Greek Art, the idea came to him that Aberdeen, the granite monument centre, would be vastly benefited by having a museum of casts which the granite workers could study. With him activity immediately followed on the heels of inspiration. He began to 'agitate' for it. He gave an inspiring lecture on 'The Sculptural Monuments of the Greeks' in the Art Gallery, at which he unfolded his scheme. The idea took root. A public meeting was convened for the following day. He proposed the motion, 'That in the best interests of the community of students attending the University, and especially of the great granite industry, it is desirable that a museum be established in connection with the Art Gallery, to contain casts of the finest examples of Classic, Gothic, Italian and other Art, and that this meeting approves of the establishing of such a Museum.' The energetic Mr. Murray of Glenburnie (now Sir James Murray) took the matter up with full

JOHN FORBES WHITE

driving power, and two and a half years later a magnificent realization of the scheme was accomplished—but the chair of the Originator was vacant.

In this Renaissance of Greek Art and Literature it must not be imagined that the old 'loves' were overlooked. Spain was revisited in order to study Velazquez more closely. The far-off Hermitage was reached, completing the list of European Galleries in which the 'Inspired Dutchman' had been sought. Rembrandt was for him a romantic passion. 'I would like to have my "Vosmaer" buried with me,' he once said, and 'I never write the letter R without thinking of Rembrandt.' When any date cropped up between 1606 and 1669 he would say, 'I wonder what Rembrandt was doing then,' or it would be, 'Rembrandt is so vivid, so pathetic, so individual that to have seen his works once is to have them on one's mind for ever.'

He loved to trace the influence of the Bible on Rembrandt, and to point out how often he painted and etched scenes from its pages which mirrored the sunshine or shadow of his own life. Shortly after his marriage came the glowing 'Samson's Wedding Feast' (Dresden). In the early married years, when the loss of several little lives was heavy on him, he painted the prayerful 'Manoah and his Wife' (Dresden). Then followed the homely and holy 'Carpenter's Shop,' with Saskia

JOHN FORBES WHITE

enfolding a child (Louvre). The growing young Titus served as model for the 'Infant Samuel at his Prayer' (Bridgewater House), and later for the 'Tobias journeying with the Angel' (Glasgow). When his mother's death was followed by his beloved Saskia's, and when the seas of adversity threatened to overwhelm him, Rembrandt turned to the 'Man of Sorrows,' divinely portraying Him in the 'Emmaus' (Louvre), in the 'Christ healing the Sick,' in the 'Flagellation' (Darmstadt), before which J. F. trembled with emotion, and in the great prints of the 'Crucifixion.'

To me there has always seemed a strange and haunting parallel between the lives of the great painter and his lover. For each there was the early prosperous heyday of youth, the happy marriage, the generous munificence, and then the deep shadow closing over the beloved one, and the brave struggle alone to the end.

J. F. was the first to discover the signed and named 'Martin Looten' which hung over a doorway in a dark room in a London house. He was instrumental in the acquisition of the fine 'Hendrike Stoffels' (1654) for the Edinburgh National Gallery which was generously presented by Sir William M'Ewan, M.P.

Velazquez was for J. F. the painter's painter — 'the incomparable.' When asked what was in his opinion the finest portrait in the world he gave unhesitatingly the Philip IV. in the National



JOHN FORBES WHITE

enfolding a child (Louvre). The growing young Titus, covered in spangles for his infant Samuel at his Father's birthday, and holding the 'Tome of the Law' (Prado and Louvre). The 'Madonna of the Rosary' (Prado) and the 'Madonna of the Rosary in the Garden of Gethsemane' (Berlin), both by the Master of the 'Madonna of the Rosary' (Berlin), and the 'Madonna of the Rosary' (Berlin), 'Madonna of Sorrows,' divinely portraying Him in the 'Gethsemane' (Louvre), in the 'Christ healing the Blind' in the 'Flagellation' (Darmstadt), before which J. F. stumbled with emotion, and in the 'Flagellation' of the 'Crucifixion.'

For more than half an hour I stood a strange and sombre painter, viewing the face of the great genius upon him. How much there was the noble, generous, joyous and youthful, the happy marriage, the generous manliness, and then the deep shadow, falling over the beloved one, and the heavy struggle alone in the end.

J. F. was the first to discover the signed and named 'Martin Loeys' whiteling over a doorway in a dark room in a Louvre gallery. He was instrumental in the acquisition of the fine 'Hans Holbein Double' painting (the 'Lion and the unicorn') in the National Gallery, which was graciously presented by Sir William M. Gaskin, M.P.

Velasquez was for J. F. the master's painter — 'the incomparable.' When asked what was in his opinion the finest picture in the world he gave unhesitatingly the 'Philip IV.', in the National



JOHN FORBES WHITE

Gallery. 'Observe the action of light on the pallid face of the worn-out king,' he would say. 'It gives to the skin the breath of life in its transparency. Paint can go no further in this direction; it disappears and becomes living flesh.' I remember some one saying that yesterday was So-and-So's birthday, 'and to-morrow is Velazquez's birthday,' said he, 'we'll drink his health.' He was always very indignant when the name was not spelt with two z's.

A painter friend once asked him, 'What picture would you choose to live with?' 'Well, my Corot, perhaps, or Rembrandt's little boy (the so-called Prince of Orange), or no, perhaps the "Meninas" (The Maids of Honour).'

'Now what did you feel before the "Meninas"?'

'As if I were before some sacred thing—one looked at it from near and far—saw new aspects, new glories, day after day one made discoveries in it.' Elsewhere he spoke of it as 'a glorified de Hooghe, perfect in its truth, in its refinement of colour and in its harmonious values and tones.' His admiration and love for the two geniuses crystallized in a masterly article which came out in *The Quarterly Review* in 1899. He spent happy weeks in the preparation of it and once exclaimed, 'It lifts one up! It's delightful. I would have liked to have shaken hands with them.' In this article he contrasts and compares 'the calm and stately Velazquez, living under the

JOHN FORBES WHITE

ceremonial influence of the Court of Spain' with 'the impassioned Rembrandt who passed his years amid the bustling vigorous and varied society of bourgeois Amsterdam.' He points out how much they have in common in their early training and in their close study of the human features, both inclining to exaggeration in their early days, both arriving at absolute mastery over facial expression. But though 'both Velazquez and Rembrandt paint what they actually see, Velazquez leaves us alone with the sitter. The painter has withdrawn; he is impersonal, he seeks not to impress his own private and particular interpretation on his work. Rembrandt, on the other hand, seems present at the interview; his personal influence is distinctly felt. He is the creator of the man, or at least his interpreter, perhaps his judge. The subject is no longer merely what he seems to all the world, he is like a ray of light split up by passing through a lens, the lens of an analytical mind.' Closely connected with this difference is another. 'Velazquez fixes his attention upon what is permanent alone, Rembrandt has attention to spare for what is not less real but is transitory.' In Velazquez's portraits 'no passing thought is traceable in those impassive faces; no emotion or changing mood plays upon their features. Rembrandt, on the other hand, adds to the deeper basis of character something of the passing phase of mind; his portraits indicate the

JOHN FORBES WHITE

fancy, the excitement, the aspiration of the moment, no less than the preoccupations of years.' Points of likeness between the two are 'their marked individuality'; the 'happy union in their work of realization and idealism'; 'the few and simple colours used by each.' Both, he adds, 'passed through the same evolution, through the several stages of first, second, and third manner; the first, scrupulously and analytically careful in detail; the second, more matured in knowledge and freedom of hand; the third broad and masterly in full and assured workmanship, the eye seeing more comprehensively and truthfully, and the hand representing more sympathetically.' He calls Velazquez 'a Greek of the Greeks,' and in a fine passage he says: 'It is not surprising to find a statuesque aspect in many of his works. These might be translated into marble or bronze, and the influence of Velazquez the *painter* would still be paramount. His "Crucifixion" suggests rather a devotional crucifix in silver or ivory, and commissioned by the king for a convent, seems almost designed for adoration. It is such a picture as the sculptor Montañes, the intimate friend of Velazquez, would have executed in wood in his own superb manner. This affinity to the sculpturesque is seen also in the "Christ of the Column" (National Gallery) in which sympathy with the great school of Spanish carvers in wood is clearly to be traced. Even the "Surrender of Breda," so

JOHN FORBES WHITE

calm and reserved in its action, so balanced in its symmetry, might be executed as a bas-relief without loss of importance. It recalls the spirit of the painter-sculptor Ghiberti's great panels on the door of the Baptistry at Florence. As to the Venus (National Gallery), Apelles might have signed it, while the "Mars" (Prado) is obviously borrowed from the "Ares" of the Ludovici Gallery at Rome. In fine, as the work of Velazquez in its whole range fills the mind, there rises in our thought a glorious Greek temple, exquisite in its proportions, strong in its symmetry, serene and fair. But with Rembrandt all is different. He has a unity equal to that of Velazquez; he gives us a whole scene, but into that whole he pours infinite variety. A fixed supreme moment is chosen, but there is nothing sculpturesque in the treatment. A drama is being enacted; movement and life are given. Take, for example, "The Good Samaritan" (Louvre) and note the helpless anguish of the wounded man as his arm hangs listless and his head falls feebly; observe the benevolence of the Samaritan and the interest of the innkeeper. The boy stands on tiptoe to see all; a maid-servant looks from a window with idle curiosity. The horses turn their heads from the food in the stalls, disturbed by the noise; a hen with raised wings drives her chickens out of harm's way. We have in all this a wealth of imagery and a richness of varied expression, both working together to

JOHN FORBES WHITE

make a complete pathetic whole. Life is given in all its varied manifestations, as if by a Shakespeare. As we think of the scope of Rembrandt's work, its significance and its spirit, we are reminded of a great Gothic cathedral, full of unexpected beauties, rich in the details of a fertile imagination, harmonious in its variety and stirring the soul of beholders with emotional suggestions. If Velazquez is severe, symmetrical, classic in his fibre, Rembrandt is a Teuton of the Teutons, mysterious, vague, passionate, tender.'

He was often asked to lecture on them. After hearing a lecture on Rembrandt, a lady said she would sell her jewels to subscribe for a course to be given by him! Perhaps the most important were those given at the Edinburgh Philosophical Society, a Society whose roll of lecturers included Thackeray and Dickens.

A few years after, the Society again asked him to lecture. The Secretary added that it was a rare thing in the annals of the Society to invite the same lecturer a second time.

Another double honour—this time entirely unprecedented—was his being re-elected President of the time-honoured St. Andrew's Society after an interval of twenty-five years. It was said that as Chairman of the Annual Banquet on St. Andrew's Day he surpassed himself in his 'buoyant brilliancy.' This was in 1894. In the same year he was strongly urged to contest South

JOHN FORBES WHITE

Aberdeen in opposition to Mr. Bryce. But he did not see his way to accede. In his earlier years he had been an active Liberal and had been largely instrumental in securing Mr. Bryce as candidate at the General Election in 1885. But he left the ranks when the split came in 1886.

In 1898 he went to Glasgow to hear Mr. Chamberlain give his first great speech on Tariff Reform—standing for four hours in a densely packed hall. On his return home he said, ‘It won’t be in my time, but in twenty years it is *bound* to come.’

J. F.’s general reading covered an enormous ground. He seemed able to assimilate the toughest Teutonic treatise or the airiest of French novels. Shakespeare was for him ‘as universal as Rembrandt.’ Like Rembrandt ‘he worked from the inward to the outward.’ For Scott he had a burning enthusiasm. Once when Claverhouse’s great speech on Death was being read aloud he cried out, ‘Read that again, well done, Sir Walter, well done.’ He regretted the decline of the reading of Scott by the younger generation. ‘Sir Walter is like stale bread to this generation,’ he would say bitterly. Or again, ‘Scott is monumental. From a mere trifle he makes a monumental phase. No plot? It is only this generation who demand mustard and pepper and vinegar—when will our jaded intellects revolt against the perpetual stimulus?’ Of *Esmond* he said, ‘How

JOHN FORBES WHITE

glorious! I feel like entering a hall of noble Greek sculpture. *What* power and pathos, never such a book for sustained thought and nobility.' The *Iliad* was 'the biggest book in the world.' *Gil Blas* was 'Brother, well, first cousin, to *Don Quixote*. 'Bewick's letters were as fine as anything in literature. Bewick was not only an artist but saw Nature in a poetic vein.' He had as great a delight in *Lavengro* as Robertson Smith, who used to say it should be read once a year. 'What style!' he exclaimed, reading aloud the apostrophes to 'Old Crome' and to Borrow's mother. Maeterlinck's *L'abeille* was described as 'a glowing book, a glowing book. Maeterlinck is a poet, philosopher and observer.' Meredith's poems bothered him. 'No, no, he takes three pages to say about the skylark what others have said exquisitely in one verse. I'm going to Homer, back to primeval forces.' A book which gave him unalloyed delight was Sir Robert Morier's *Hadji Baba*, and Ford's *Handbook of Spain*, a work by another of our Ambassadors, he considered a masterpiece. A proof of his catholic taste as well as of his genial disregard for convention was that he once insisted on reading aloud *Wee Macgregor* to his fellow-passengers during a protracted railway journey!

Besides his studies and reading, and besides the claims of his own business, a business which was becoming yearly more harassing, owing to

JOHN FORBES WHITE

the inflow of cheap dutyless American flour, there were a hundred and other outlets for J. F.'s unceasing energy. He had been President of the National Association of British and Irish Millers in 1890. For twenty-five years he acted as Vice-Consul for Sweden and Norway, and was appointed by King Oscar a Knight of the Royal Order of Wasa—an order created by Gustavus III. for the recognition of services rendered specially by men of science and art. He was also Consul for France. In the last years of his life he spoke at innumerable political meetings, working like a Trojan for the Unionist cause. He was a life Governor of Dundee University College and a member of its Council. He was elected President of the Incorporated Corn Trade Association of Leith. He was chosen by that corporation to go as delegate about the food supply in time of war, and was afterwards congratulated on his evidence. He made a weekly journey to the Edinburgh Corn Exchange (tempered by a lunch with rare vintages and refreshing Art talk with Irvine Smith, or by an hour in Sir George Reid's studio). He wrote at least two 'Appreciations' of friends, to wit Robertson Smith and R. A. Neil the classical scholar. 'Write my life,' said another friend, 'you've such a live hand with a dead man.' He spoke at the first meeting of the Classical Association of Scotland. He threw himself into the lists of newspaper correspond-

JOHN FORBES WHITE

ence when any subject needed championing, and his own private correspondence was voluminous. Take a letter of the year 1903, which reveals the ripe quality of his criticism. It is to Mr. D. Y. Cameron.

‘MY DEAR AQUAFORTIST—St. Laumer is superb. I hang over it in silent admiration and find in it the work of a great master. You are well put by Wedmore as one of the big four, Rembrant, Méryon, Whistler, and Cameron. I find qualities in St. Laumer not reached by Méryon or even Whistler, a fine mixture of extreme delicacy and of great strength. You have got what Ruskin denied to etching, splendid deep shadows yet without blottiness. The crossing of the lines has disappeared. There is no sense of torturing the network. The result comes *somehow*, a depth of shadow rivalling mezzotint. Then the firmness of your pure line, sure and strong in its perfect simplicity, is admirable. It is so *certain*. Then the artistic effect is so fine. Suggestion comes in everywhere. The leading line tells yet without bravura. Quiet, as all fine work is, soothing as Art should be, satisfying as a great work must be. As I look at this interior I think of Bosboom in water-colours and I can give no higher praise.’

Or here is another in the same year. It is to the Curator of the Glasgow Corporation Gallery

JOHN FORBES WHITE

on hearing of the proposal to have an exhibition of eighteenth-century English and French paintings.

'I see Glasgow is going to repeat the Guild-hall French and English of the eighteenth century. In France this is an unhappy comparison, for except the splendid Watteau and the strong Chardin I don't find much to give me pleasure in the Frenchmen. It pained me to read such high-falutin praise given by some critics to the huge scenic theatrical works of Fragonard, as if they were marvels. They seem to me sufficiently good for the Foyer of the French Opera House. They were bought and boomed and sold again at ever higher prices, and now the British public is called upon to admire and worship them. Such admiration will do much harm to British taste for they are pretty, *voilà tout*. One gets weary of the affectations of Lancret, Pater and Co. and turns with pleasure to the pigs of Morland. France could make a fine show with the 2nd and 3rd quarter of the nineteenth century with Delacroix, Delaroche, Isabey, Fromentin, to be followed and accompanied by the splendid Barbizon School and the heavenly Corot. I would have sacrificed the historical parallel to the best of both nations.'

Or yet another to the veteran Israels:

JOHN FORBES WHITE

‘It was a pleasure to see so much of you in London and Paris, and to find the old brightness unabated and that you are in spirit as young as ever. Your talk is still sparkling and your humour inexhaustible. This is as it should be. You must feel proud, justly proud, of the position you have gained in the hearts and heads of thousands to whom your name is a household word. Such honours frequently come too late, but you have lived to see and hear your praises and yet you bear all so modestly, the true mark of a really big man. Somehow I feel that I participate in a very small way in your honour in so far that thirty-six years ago (and more) I knew that it would come. Your Guildhall show is magnificent, the record of a life of growth and progress onward. One can trace your steps as we follow Rembrandt’s. People may say that your “Jewish Bride” is loose, just as they did about him in his last days. But if it wants detail and precision it has an ample manner, an outcome of your knowledge.’

Equally illuminating are letters received by him in the same year.

Canon Ainger writes:

‘MASTER’S HOUSE, TEMPLE, E.C.

‘Dec. 19. 1903.

‘DEAR DR. WHITE—Thanks for your kind words about *Crabbe*, which I greatly value, be-

JOHN FORBES WHITE

cause you are not one of the many who delegate their judgment to their favourite organ in the Press! The leaders in that direction, *Times*, *Athenaeum*, etc., have not been very sympathetic. They complain that after this long period of neglect Crabbe is not *praised* by me sufficiently!!

‘Best regards to you all, and with all good wishes for the season.—I remain, dear Dr. White, very sincerely yours,

ALFRED AINGER.

‘Many thanks for raising hopes for next Autumn.’

And Hilaire Belloc, a stranger to him, to whom he had written enthusiastically about the brilliant *Path to Rome*, writes:

‘DEAR LECTOR—You are indeed kind! It is a very great compliment you pay me and one I shall always remember. What a good thing if books were living things between living people as this seems to have been! Not all the newspaper criticism in the world is worth a good letter spontaneous from a man that feels with me.

‘Alas! I wish I could really write Latin verse! I admire it, but from afar. I am never certain of quantity, gender, declension, custom, that is because I think of twenty thousand other things. Thank you again a thousand times.—Si vales valeo,

AUCTOR.’

JOHN FORBES WHITE

Then there were innumerable social functions. He was always one of the chief speakers at public banquets. It was usual to hear 'that he had lifted the tone of the speeches.' Some one called him 'the silver-tongued.' Once when he spoke at an artists' dinner in London every one was asking, 'Who is he?' He could always be trusted to say the happy word when introducing a lecturer to a large audience, while in private gatherings he was always the centre of talk and fun. 'Do I talk too much?' he would ask anxiously when people had been hanging on his words.

It was this combination of the scholar and the man of action that was so unusual. It was the blending of a deep original mind with the irresponsible gaiety of a schoolboy that was so attractive. 'Genius is the capacity of remaining a boy,' said some one, thinking of him. 'I don't know a more originally-minded man than your father,' said Sir Arthur Mitchell.

He threw himself into sports and games as eagerly as into work. In his 'middle period' he played tennis with furious zeal. In his early and late years he struggled with golf, now being elated by the discovery of the correct swing and then being plunged into deepest gloom when next day it escaped him! He would seize a spoon at the dinner-table to illustrate some action he thought he had mastered. He was a fearless swimmer and his daily rides finishing with a

JOHN FORBES WHITE

canter on the sands at Donmouth were a delight.

Like all enthusiasts he had the power of stimulating others. Many and many a young man owed his life's awakening to him and was led by his example to combine the Arts and Humanities with a business life, 'Cultivate the beautiful; the useful will take care of itself,' was a Japanese proverb he was fond of quoting. He found time for everything. No appeal for help was ever overlooked. No trouble was spared to write the helpful letter or speak the helpful word. When lying ill, with a weary back, his thoughts went out to an old friend, a road-mender at Donside. He did all he could to get him released from his back-breaking work and to find him a less arduous job. 'Naebody ever speaks a bad word of Maister White,' said another old friend of 'the open road' to J. F. himself! A good summing up of him was, 'I don't know whether to admire most his culture and love of Art or his *kindly heart*,' and one who loved him dearly said that he had 'the brain of a giant and the heart of a child.'

And it was not only the great things in Art that roused his enthusiasm. To him what Stephen Paget calls 'the odds and ends of beauty' were immeasurably beautiful. 'A blade of grass could make me weep,' I have heard him say, and I have seen him kiss a little dead bird. 'Even a blind man would know *that* is beautiful,' he would say when fondling a piece of fine porcelain or

JOHN FORBES WHITE

lovingly handling an Elzevir. 'When I scent the wild thyme when I am alone,' he wrote to a nature-loving golfing friend, 'I get down on my knees and bury my nose in the fragrant humble plant and think of my mother who delighted in the lovely thing. Am I a sentimentalist when I am inclined to spare a crow-foot with my cleek? What a lovely world it is! If people would only use their eyes how much happiness would be increased in pure enjoyment.' And to one of his own family he wrote: 'What a lovely world! how fair it all is! The bank of azaleas and rhododendrons was unspeakably beautiful from the other side of the river. George will have told you all about it and of my rapture. Mixed colour could go no further. St. Francis thanked God for the fair earth with its grain and grass and flowers of fine colour—well he might.'

His life seemed a thanksgiving for the beauty in the world. When dark clouds gathered round him in the last years, his glorious spirit made him rise triumphantly above them. 'The world is full of beauty' were among his last words, and a poet friend, Mr. Ronald Campbell Macfie, has well sung about him:

Thou who hast Beauty, all life long,
 In sun and shade,
Followed, and worshipped, and obeyed,
 And unafraid;
Beauty will make thy spirit strong,

JOHN FORBES WHITE

Beauty will glorify the gloom;
Beauty will show the unborn light
Leaping within the laden womb
 Of weary night;
Beauty will make the silence song,
Beauty will make the darkness bright.

Hast thou not heard the loving heart
Whose music passes music's art?
Hast thou not seen a white hand flit
Across the darkness, lighting it?
Peace surely waits beyond the pain
And calm beyond the troubled bar.
We must believe that Death is gain,
We blossoms of a dying star!
And surely He is kind and wise
Who made such Beauty for thine eyes.

We watched thee sow; we watched thee reap
Wisdom and honour day by day,
And now when comes the silent Sleep
To lead thee down the Lonely Way,
We will not sigh, we will not weep,
Knowing God's thoughts are wise and deep.

What though the night be bleak and dumb!
 Out of the night
 Will arise light,
And song will from the silence come!
 O lie at rest
 On Beauty's breast,
The God of Beauty knoweth best!

THE END



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